















REVIEW

OF THE

LECTURES OF WM. A. SMITH, D. D.,

ON THE

PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE OF SLAVERY,

AS EXHIBITED IN THE

INSTITUTION OF DOMESTIC SLAVERY  
IN THE UNITED STATES:

WITH THE

DUTIES OF MASTERS TO SLAVES.

IN A

SERIES OF LETTERS ADDRESSED TO THE AUTHOR.

BY REV. JOHN H. POWER, D. D.



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## P R E F A C E .

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REV. WILLIAM A. SMITH, D. D.

*Dear Sir,*—As, in reviewing your lectures on “The Philosophy and Practice of Slavery,” I have addressed myself to the system of American slavery through you as one of its ablest advocates, I deem it due to myself—and others may feel some interest in the case—to say in this prefatory note, that, although I have discussed the subject with a pointedness which I believe its magnitude and character merit, I have not, knowingly or with intention, treated you personally with the least discourtesy whatever. I have found much in your book that has surprised me; some things that might seem to implicate your integrity or your intelligence, and some of them, as I conceive, incompatible with the moral principles of the Gospel; but in exhibiting their real or supposed character, errors, and consequences, I have not allowed



myself to impute to you any other than sincere and honest motives and purposes. And while I am at issue with you on all the vital points in the system of slavery, and have discussed them with frankness, I have no other than feelings of Christian kindness and respect for you personally. If I have written any thing which may seem to be severe, I claim that it be understood as applying—not personally, but—to the system of slavery which I oppose. Were it not for the fact, that many have not yet learned to distinguish between an exposition of a man's real or supposed errors, and an attack upon the reputation or motives of the man himself, this notice and explanation would not be at all necessary. There is one thing, however, connected with this discussion I regret; namely, these letters, however harmless you may judge them to be, will not be permitted to circulate in the south, notwithstanding you have suggested that "the duty of thoroughly investigating the subject seems to be laid upon the country as a moral necessity."

The south generally are either not allowed, or are not disposed, to see but one side of this ques-

tion. So true is this, that it would not be hazarding much pecuniarily to proffer a few thousand copies of these letters to the south simply on the terms that you should recommend the reading of them by slave-owners, and a promise on their part to read them. That class is not generally willing to look the system of slavery, with all its consequences here and hereafter, full in the face; though in not a few instances, as they approach the future world, the system looks them in the face, and fearful of the results there of claiming the right of property in the persons of men, women, and children in this world, and of transmitting that claim to their posterity, in their "*last will and testament*" they relinquish all such claim by emancipating their slaves, virtually saying, "*I dare not meet the consequences in eternity!*"

Praying that the author of the lectures reviewed and the writer of the letters in which they are reviewed may yet "see eye to eye," in all things that will most glorify God and benefit man,

I remain yours, most respectfully,

JOHN H. POWER.



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REVIEW  
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LETTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

The claims set up for slavery will awaken opposition to the system—Individuals not responsible for the system—Difference between the case of individuals and that of the system—If the principle of slavery being more firmly fixed in the south than ever before, is evidence of the purity of the system, the fact of the increasing and settled opposition to it in the north is equally clear proof of its corruption—The fact that the influence of slavery has increased in despite of opposition, no more proves that it is morally right than the same thing proves that intemperance and profanity are morally right—Its progress is attributable alone to its commercial value, and not to its moral purity or worth.

REV. DR. W. A. SMITH,—I have just finished the third careful reading of your "*Philosophy and Practice of Slavery*;" and as it is not always vanity in authors to desire to know something of the opinion of their readers, and presuming that you are not singular in that respect, I have concluded to submit to you some of my views of your book;



and as you have given us your late work in the form of lectures, I have, in my strictures on it, chosen the epistolary form. I have long desired to see the subject of which you treat discussed by some one of the ablest Christian philosophers and scholars of the south, but have not been gratified till I obtained your work. And though I may differ from you on most of the material points discussed, I shall take pleasure in awarding to you full praise on all in which I may believe your ingenious and learned labors may serve the cause of truth and righteousness. And I will here say, in general terms, if your book should be generally read by the American people, I think it will do much good. *First.* It will correct the errors of those who suppose, and teach, that there are but few or no difficulties in the way of slavery emancipation. However your imagination may have led you astray on some features of the subject, you have furnished facts and reasons sufficient to convince reasonable men that there are real embarrassments in the case, which require the best judgment of the ablest and best men in the land to surmount. But the difficulties are not insuperable. *Secondly.* Your book will do good in another way. It will confirm the doubts of many of that numerous class in the south, of whom you speak, that the moral character of the system of

slavery is questionable, if it does not convince them that the system is really indefensible on moral and Christian principles. *Thirdly*. It will also diminish the confidence of some of the friends of the system, when they see that a man of your talents, learning, and zeal has to leave the morality of the system so obscure, and the system itself so vulnerable to attack at all its vital points; but, *fourthly*, your book will operate powerfully in another direction. The character you give to slavery; the "despotism" you claim for the system; the demands set up for its unlimited extension; the offensive insinuations that where it does not exist civilization is defective; the invidious comparisons of the free white laboring classes with slaves; the superior intelligence and civilization claimed for owners—all this, and much more of similar character, in connection with your high position in the south, and the fact that the southern press, secular and religious, has indorsed your book as a fair exponent of the system and of southern views of the subject, will appeal to the moral sense, Christianity, patriotism, and self-respect of every friend of liberty, to resist such despotic claims and the system in which this "extreme despotism" is inherent. This spirit, when fully developed and organized—and your book will contribute no little to its consummation—will say

to the system, "Thus far shalt thou come and no further," be the consequences what they may. I fully agree with you when you say, "The duty of thoroughly investigating it"—the system of American slavery—"seems to be laid upon the country as a moral necessity." (Page 29.) I have long entertained similar views, amounting almost to a conviction of duty, but from a love of peace, and because a suitable occasion did not present itself, I have deferred it till the present. When I read your "Philosophy and Practice of Slavery," and saw the high grounds taken, the enormous claims set up for the system, the fearless manner in which you had executed your work in condemning the pulpit, denouncing doctors, reproofing statesmen, and "teaching senators wisdom," I felt that the occasion was such as to justify me in "showing my opinion." From my personal acquaintance with you, and knowing your firmness in maintaining what you believe to be right, and that you concede to an opponent all that you would claim for yourself, I had no fears that you would abandon the true issue, though your system might be sorely pressed, or that you would seek relief in public sympathy in a defeat, on the assumption that an antagonist was personal or severe. To these general remarks I will add, that while I entertain a high regard for you personally, I shall investigate

the system of American slavery with a plainness, candor, and firmness; bearing, I hope, some proportion to the importance of the question. I may not, however, follow you in consecutive order through your lectures, as there is much in them that, whether true or false, does not affect the cardinal principles of the system. All that is important I design to examine.

Your first lecture, which is introductory to your main design, contains some things deserving of notice, though not essential to the real issue. To the inquiry, "Is the institution of domestic slavery sinful?" you answer: "The affirmative assumes that an immense community of southern people, of undoubted piety, are, nevertheless, involved in great moral delinquency on the subject of slavery." (Page 12.) Many of your readers, less acquainted with you than myself, will suspect that you designed to prejudice the true issue by an appeal to the sympathies and prejudices of the south. While I do not charge you with any thing of the kind, I have no doubt that such appeals have done much to hinder an impartial investigation of the system of American slavery. The logic of this quotation is—if the system of slavery is sinful, then every one who holds a slave is a sinner; but many slaveholders in the south are pious, therefore it is absurd to suppose that slavery is morally

wrong. Again, you claim in behalf of the piety of the south—you certainly mean the truly Christian part of community—that if they considered slavery to be wrong they could rid themselves of it. “If government be, as it undoubtedly is, the agent of the people, and the people choose, they are certainly competent by this agent to free themselves from this institution.” (Page 13.) This reasoning is capitally defective on two main points; and if it does not excite the prejudices of the south, neither will it relieve the scruples of the conscientious and candid, nor enlighten either the south or the north. 1. Your argument requires you to assume that the converted and Scripturally pious portion of the south have it in their power to “free themselves from the institution of slavery,” by changing the laws and government. This is not true, and never was the fact. Then we can easily perceive that the system of slavery may be sinful, and Christian people be involved in the evil consequences without being sinners merely on that account; just as a government may engage in a system of *sinful* war, and thereby involve its innocent subjects in the evils, without those evils they, as individuals, may have to endure for a time constituting them sinners. Christians in the south, as is the fact elsewhere, *as Christians*, have no control over the civil institutions of the state,



whether sinful or righteous. If sinful, they may have to suffer many evils under them before they are changed; but, as *citizens*, under free governments such as ours, they are, in proportion to their number and influence, in that degree responsible for the character of the civil institutions of the state; and if they are involved in the sin of corrupt institutions, it is not for bearing with Christian patience the evils they, as *individuals*, and as *Christians*, can not control, but for not exerting their influence as Christian citizens to correct the sinful institutions of the state.

What the responsibilities of Christian citizens in the south are in regard to the system of slavery I shall not stop now to inquire. But if you say your argument does not assume that the Christians—the truly pious—in the south have the power to free themselves from slavery by changing the government, then the piety of southern Christians is thrown out of the question, and the case falls under the head of southern politics; and your reference to the piety of Christians in the south was not only irrelevant and altogether useless, but unfortunate, and may excite prejudices that will prevent, instead of aid, a sober judgment in the case. A second and still more serious defect in your position is, you wholly ignore the radical *distinction* between the *system* of slavery, as such, and the

case of *individuals* holding slaves under the system, and treat the subject as if the individual case contained all that is embodied in the system. By this process it would seem to be your design to extort the concession that the *system is morally right*, or to require that each *individual* who holds slaves under the *system* should be *denounced as a sinner*; neither of which well-informed Christians will do. Your dilemma may embarrass some minds till the light of facts renders it harmless. That there is a plain distinction between the *system* of slavery and the case of *individuals* holding slaves under that system you will not deny; but as others less informed may deny it, I submit a few remarks on it here. By the system, I mean that government in a state or community which authorizes the holding of slaves as property within the limits of such state. By the *case of individuals*, I mean such persons as, in their individual character, hold slaves under the provisions of that system. From this view it is seen at once that the *system*, as such, and the case of an individual under the system are widely-different things. 1. The system must exist as a code *before* any one can become a slaveholder by its authority. 2. Individuals may change their relations to the system by being slaveholders to-day, and to-morrow disposing of them, thereby becoming non-slave-

holders, while the *system* remains perfectly unchanged; whereas, if the two were not entirely distinct, to change the one would equally change the other. 3. The system may contain principles and powers which individuals may never use or exercise. There are other points of difference between the system and individuals equally clear, but these are sufficient to remove all doubts of the fact. No right-minded man believes that the *mere legal* relation of owner and slave is, under all circumstances, in itself sinful; for, if it were, as men are frequently brought into this legal relation by the "operation of law" without their knowledge or consent, the absurdity would follow that the system could make men sinners whenever it pleased, without any action or will of their own! In the light of these facts it can easily be seen, that although the *system* may be *sinful*, men may be involved in the evil as individuals, without being sinners on that account merely, if they do not use its sinful powers, and if they sustain the legal relation, in the fear of God, as the best they can do for the slave and themselves for the time being, with a view to his ultimate freedom, and if they use their influence as citizens that all bad laws and systems may be corrected or substituted by those that are just and right. I can but regret that you thought it necessary to connect a defense of

the purity and justice of the system of American slavery with the piety of southern Christians; for while, from my personal knowledge of both, I highly appreciate the piety of many in the south who sustain this relation, I am bound by the same principle of candor to oppose the *system* as corrupt and sinful.

Having shown that your appeal in behalf of the piety of Christians in the south was wholly unnecessary, and, also, that the merits of the question—whether the system of American slavery is sinful or not—has nothing to do with the piety or impiety of individuals, I proceed to notice some other matters on which you seem to rely with considerable confidence, before I come to examine your main positions in support of the system of slavery. I shall not notice here your charges against *Jefferson* and the *Methodist Episcopal Church* for their opposition to slavery, as the principles involved will be fully examined in another place. It is true, indeed, that the doctrines antagonistic to slavery, emanating from these and kindred sources, have been, and still are “inculcated from professors’ chairs,” as you say, and by a thousand other agencies, till the American mind is deeply imbued with them; and you have borne testimony that this feeling in favor of liberty and against slavery is not confined to “the north,”

but has taken deep hold on the minds of many in the south. You appear, however, to comfort yourself and those of your school—I do not mean the literary institution over which you preside with so much ability, but *pro-slavery* men both north and south—with the *assumption* that “slavery by reason of causes which are evidently, though mysteriously, at work, is this day more firmly grounded in the confidence of the great mass of the southern people, and more extensively ramified and interlocked with other civil institutions of the *whole* country, than at any former period of its history!” (Page 23.) In this you evidently intend to implicate divine Providence in favor of the system of American slavery. Hence you add, “Truly this is a phenomenon for which the philosophy of the day will not account.” And assuming also that the “fixed” fact of slavery, as now existing in the country, can not be accounted for on the supposition that the system is wrong—is *sinful*—you kindly furnish a key to unlock the mystery; namely, that the system of slavery, “so potent in practical results, and so heedless of the fierce war that is waged against it, is, after all, *underlaid by a vast mine of principle—pure, essential truth.*” (Page 28.)

Now, if the assumed or real prosperity of slavery can be clearly accounted for without any

such mysterious interference of Providence, as you suppose, and if the system has no such foundation in either truth or righteousness as is claimed for it, to say the least, a beautiful conclusion will be totally spoiled! You have attempted to throw an awe and mystery around slavery that have no existence in fact. It is said an argument that proves too much proves nothing; your process of reasoning and assuming will prove almost all the wickedness in the world to be equally as pious as the system of slavery. For example, the manufacture, vending, and use of ardent spirits have been opposed by the best men and brightest talents of the nation; have been assailed from the pulpit, the bar, and the bench; by the press, secular and religious; by deliberative bodies, ecclesiastical and civil; by prohibitory laws and heavy penalties, and still the business—"so potent in practical results, and so heedless of the fierce war waged against it"—has gone on with increasing velocity, destroying domestic peace, making widows and orphans, producing poverty and ignorance, staining the land with tears and blood, and bearing its victims to eternity at the rate of fifty thousand a year, till it has slain its millions—still it "is a great practical truth, a fixed fact in the country!" and "is this day more firmly grounded," . . . "ramified and interlocked with" the articles of



trade, and used as a beverage in "the whole country, than at any former period of its history!" And is the solution of this "mystery" to be found in "a vast mine of principle—pure, essential truth underlying" the business? You revolt at the idea! And well you may; and were I seriously to urge that as the true interpretation of the case, you would justly charge me with consummate folly, if not with positive madness. But how will you account for this "fixed fact?" You reply, it is the commercial value of the business—the dollars and cents—that stimulates and inflames the depravity and cupidity of men, and that constitutes the life and power of the business, so that it overrides all opposition and triumphs in the face of its powerful opposers. You tell me at once, destroy its commercial value and make it a losing business as a whole, and even legislation could not keep it alive, and when dead it would not have friends enough among all its present admirers to give it a decent burial! Now, though I do not claim a perfect analogy between the two systems, or the manner in which individuals become connected with them, I fearlessly maintain that the active, life-giving power of the system of American slavery is precisely the same, and the marvelous "causes" that are working so "mysteriously" in its favor are nothing more nor less

than its *commercial value* as a whole. As this will be shown more at large in another place, I will only add here, destroy the profitableness in dollars and cents of the system of slavery as a whole, and let it become a "sinking business," and Pharaoh was not more ardent and anxious, when all Egypt was in tears and lamentations for the death of the first-born in every house, to hasten the departure of the Hebrews from his land, than the south would be to free themselves from this "venerable, patriarchal institution!" It was on this principle that it declined in the northern states and has concentrated itself mainly in the south. In the north, in our early history, the system served a temporary purpose, and it was retained and used just as long as it was profitable. When it became unprofitable, if not a losing business, they abolished the system. There was no more mystery, benevolence, or moral virtue in the north abolishing slavery than there is in a man abandoning a business; at best of doubtful morality, when it is not only yielding no profit but bringing him in debt! While I award no moral virtue to the north for abolishing slavery, I ask your special attention to a fact, as it turns all the force of your very solemn presumption in favor of slavery against that system. Since slavery has been abolished in the north, not only have their resources of comfort and



wealth been developed, and the people advanced in literature and the arts and sciences, to a degree beyond precedent, considering their soil and climate; but a deep antislavery feeling has taken hold of the public mind, "and which"—I quote you in defense of slavery—"continues to strike its roots deeper and deeper in all the relations of society," and "so potent in practical results and so heedless of the fierce war that is waged against it," that the indelible conviction is that its practical results can only be accounted for by assuming that "it is, after all, *underlaid* somewhere by a *vast mine of principles—pure, essential truths*—which are firmly rooted in the belief of all civilized and honest men." . . . Dear Doctor, I do not avail myself of this occasion to turn your arms against yourself and your system, because I deem it important to the main question, but to let our readers see how weak a strong man may be in defense of a bad cause, and to apprise them of the fact that, notwithstanding your high position and weight of character as a scholar and Christian philosopher, your speculations, even on minor points, much more on grave matters, must be received with caution and not without careful examination.

In closing my strictures on your introductory lecture, allow me most respectfully to suggest that your visions of peace on the subject of American

slavery, on the terms you propose, are wholly delusive. On the contrary, if your claims for the system are a fair exponent of the views and feelings of the south, your "*Philosophy and Practice of Slavery*" is little less than a stereotyped declaration of war! If the American pulpit must defend slavery; the Church defend slavery; politicians and statesmen defend slavery; congressmen and senators defend slavery; the doctors and literati of the land defend slavery; the "text-books"—yours being a specimen—in the literary institutions of our country defend slavery; if apprentices, clerks, subordinates of every kind, children, wives, mothers, citizens, must all admit themselves to be a species of slaves, and defend slavery, as the price and terms of "peace"—peace on the subject will be a stranger in this republic till the whole system is eradicated and the land purified from its pollutions. I devoutly hope the claims of the system, so grossly offensive to freemen, may be so modified as to prevent the painful results that must otherwise follow.

Before I close this interview permit me to guard you against an error into which you, and the defenders of slavery, are liable to fall. It is common with you to set down at once, and without further inquiry, all who oppose the system of slavery as "northern abolitionists, fanatics, socialists,

agrarians," etc., and with this judgment they are dismissed without a further hearing. I wholly disclaim that character. I was born and raised in the midst of slavery, and had reached the years of manhood before ever my feet pressed the soil in a free state. I was converted to God in a slaveholding state, and what ministerial character I have was formed in the midst of slavery, preaching to the masters and slaves. I have a southern constitution, and am southern in my sympathies as far as the south is right. And with all this I am uncompromisingly antislavery. Nor did I get my antislavery views and feelings from the north. Before my heart was changed by grace, or I had professed Christianity, or united with the Church, in prosecuting my worldly business with the view of accumulating wealth, I came to the point where I had to become a slave-owner or change my business plans. I paused, read the Bible, examined the subject; and, in the light of the Bible alone, decided forever against the system of involuntary, perpetual slavery. My convictions of its wrong have long since become a part of my nature—my very being! When I made this decision I had never read a page or paragraph outside of the Bible against the system; nor had I heard a sermon, lecture, or speech against it. Since then I have examined the subject thoroughly, which has

only confirmed my convictions that the system is not of God.

Hoping to address you again soon, I remain  
your southern, Bible-believing friend and reviewer,

J. H. P.

## LETTER II.

ERRORS IN THE DEFINITION OF SLAVERY  
EXPOSED.

Logic and ethics defective as to the relations and claims of justice and benevolence—Erroneous definition of slavery vitiates this whole scheme of philosophy—Unwarrantable use and abuse of terms—Control by the will of another not the principle, but a mere *accident* of the principle of slavery—Such defense of slavery will corrupt the public mind and depreciate self-respect—The defense contradicts itself in making government both master, owner, and agent of the governed—Radical error in assuming that *servant* and *slave* are convertible terms and mean the same thing—All slaves are servants, but all servants are not slaves.

REV. DR. SMITH,—At my earliest convenience I address you again on the question at issue between us. I regret that in discussing this grave subject you did not find it convenient to be more methodical in your arrangement. Nearly every topic of importance to the main question has been extended in detached forms through most of your lectures. This must diminish the interest of your book with the great majority of your readers, and very much increase the labor of reviewing it. It is not till we reach page 151 that we gather distinctly your main points. There you say, "That

the abstract principle of the institution of slavery and the principles of natural rights coincide, and that both have the unqualified approbation of holy Scripture, can not be successfully controverted." Instead of discussing those points separately, and bringing each out in its own strength, you have mixed them up and run them through a hundred and fifty pages. I will not, however, complain, as you had "a natural right" to choose your own course, as I shall also choose mine in reviewing you. In this second lecture, you enter with commendable courage upon the discussion of "THE ABSTRACT PRINCIPLE OF THE INSTITUTION OF DOMESTIC SLAVERY;" and to prepare the way for a defense of the system, notwithstanding the "many cases in which slaveholders do wrong" by its express authority, you tell us it is "absurd" to suppose that because "an abstract principle of action being right, the action itself is right." To illustrate you give the case of "A.," who "justly owes B. one hundred dollars," and as it took all of A.'s property to pay the debt and left his wife and children to suffer, you pronounce exacting payment "a very wicked" act. (Pages 32, 33.) "Because," you affirm, "this is a case in which the claims of *benevolence* march before the claims of justice." But what would you do, Doctor, if B.'s wife and children were equally destitute and suffering, till A. paid

his just debt? I hope you will settle this delicate question between those neighbors more satisfactorily than it now is. In the mean time your logic has blundered in having *justice* claiming and authorizing in the *premises* and *benevolence* denying and controlling in the *conclusion*. Any principle that would oppose and defeat the claims of justice is not benevolence, but *injustice*. I do not notice this defect in your logic and ethics because it is important to the issue, but for another purpose.

It is a rule of evidence, I believe, if a witness testifies falsely in one case he is not to be believed in any. The principle of this rule, though in a milder form, is applicable to many others besides legal subjects. For example, the arguments and conclusions of a philosopher and logician, who falls into serious errors on minor points which are not difficult to comprehend, are not to be received on grave and important matters which are much more obscure, without the greatest caution; if, indeed, they should be received as authority at all.

You have taken great pains to define and to defend your definition of the "Principle of the System of Slavery," to suit the main object and end had in view in your lectures. This, doubtless, you saw was indispensable to your success, as you have made it not only the chief corner-stone of your superstructure, but also the key-stone of



the principal arch in the pro-slavery temple! Should this foundation, which you have laid with so much care and learned labor, fail, the temple itself, as far as your defense is concerned, will be as hopelessly ruined as that of the Philistines' Dagon when its pillars were removed. No real or supposed delicacy involved in the case, neither the high respect I entertain for you personally, shall deter me from fully testing its strength. You truthfully say that "the definite meaning of the phrase, *abstract principle of slavery*, is indispensable in this investigation." (Page 37.) You proceed: "What, then, is the *principle* of the system of domestic slavery? Observe that is the principle for which we inquire. What, then, is the system itself? For—to speak with strict philosophical propriety—our idea of the system is the chronological condition of our idea of the principle, as our idea of the principle is the logical condition of our idea of the system." (Page 38.) This, Doctor, is surely a most unpropitious commencement to arrive at "the definite meaning" of this important question; and as I am sure no man of only good sound common-sense can derive any light from it, and as it will cost me too much time to enlighten *it!* I will dismiss this part of your "definite meaning," by assuring you that if men have to swallow such a dark and mysterious dose



as this in order to become *pro-slavery*, your book will make but few converts among men of good sense.

As if conscious of this yourself, your next effort is more intelligible. "The system is made up of two correlative relations—master and slave. Here there are but two ideas—the idea of master and the idea of slave, as correlatives. These are all the ideas that enter into the system as a system merely. Whatever abstract principle, therefore, this system envelops, is to be found in these two terms. It need not, and should not, be sought for any where else; for these two relations make the whole system." (Page 38.) . . . "What, then, is the correlative meaning of these terms? MASTER. . . . The word signifies *a chief director; one who governs or directs either men or business.* The leading idea is that of governor by his own will. SLAVE. The *derivation* of this word is not a settled question. There is no difficulty, however, in fixing the meaning—*one who is subject to the will or direction of another.* As a concrete, *master* means one who is governing, *in some particular instance or form*, by his own will; and *slave*, one who is so governed *in some particular instance.*" . . . "And whether they are considered as abstract or concrete terms, they are correlatives—the one implies the other. A *system* of slavery is a

state or order of things established by law or custom, in which one set of men are the masters to a given extent, and another the slaves to that extent. *Domestic* slavery is an instance in which the order or state of things constituting the system itself is made a part of the family relation. The head of the family is the *master*, and the slave is subject, as to the use of his time and labor, to the control of the master, as the other members of the family." . . . "Hence, as the abstract idea of master is governing by one's own will, and that of slave is submission or subjection to such control," . . . "it follows that *the abstract principle of slavery is the general principle of submission or subjection to control by the will of another.*" (Pages 39, 40.) . . . "Every condition into which it enters is a state of slavery to the extent in which it does so enter." . . . "*Subjection* is the being put under the control of another. *Submission* is the delivering of one's self to the control of another. The one implies the consent of the will and the other does not." . . . "Hence, our definition is sufficiently wide to embrace that which is conceded by all." . . . "It takes in *submission* as well as *subjection.*" . . . "He who is subjected to such control is a slave; and he who submits to such control is not the less so." (Page 41.) . . . "Hence, the true

philosophical definition of the principle is *control by the will of another, with its correlative—submission or subjection—implied.* . . . “As the whole of the abstract idea of the system of slavery is to be found in the terms *master* and *slave* in correlation, and *submission and subjection to control by the will of another* is the whole idea contained in the correlative sense of these terms—certainly nothing more and nothing less—the definition given is the whole, and nothing more, of the abstract principle of the institution.” (Page 45.)

. . . “It will readily occur to all intelligent minds that this principle enters more or less as an essential element into every form of human government. No government can be appropriate to human beings, in their present fallen condition, that does not embody this generic element in a greater or less degree.” (Page 47.) . . . “But a state of freedom is the opposite of a state of slavery.” . . . “Hence, *self-control* is the abstract principle of freedom, as its opposite—*control by another*—is the principle of slavery.” (Page 48.) . . . “Hence, we see that God has rendered the blessing of civil freedom inseparable from the presence and operation of the principle of slavery.” . . . “Government must place its subjects under the operation of the principle of slavery in some things, the more effectually to

secure their practical freedom in other things.” (Page 50.) . . . “Seeing that the abstract principle of slavery enters necessarily and essentially as an element into every form of civil government, it is worse than idle to affirm that it is wrong *per se*. But, more than this, it has the sanction of Jehovah; for government is expressly declared in holy Scripture to be his ordinance.” . . . “How imbecile, then, is it to say of the system of slavery that it is wrong in the abstract, wrong in principle! How little do men consider what they affirm in this declaration!” (Page 56.)

As you have discussed these topics more or less nearly all through your book, I have deemed it more convenient to present them together, as they contain the strength of your main positions in your own language. You have very adroitly *assumed*, as the climax of your definitions, statements and arguments that “Jehovah sanctions” the system of American slavery, for the support of which your book was written. As I intend to discuss those vital points of the system separately, and as the Divine sanction will come up in the proper place, I only make this passing remark here and turn to the main question—*What is the true character of the principle and system of slavery?*

And, 1. Your definitions, supported as they are

by all your explanations and arguments, are radically defective, and, as far as they apply to the principle and system of American slavery, are only accidents, or at best attributes of that system. The liberty you have taken with language, and the use made of terms, would establish African slavery, both in the abstract and the concrete, under every form of government where the relation of "master and servant" and "control by the will of another" exist. But they exist in some form or other in every state in this republic; consequently, according to your logic, African slavery exists or may exist in every state in this Union! This contradicts facts, and demonstrates that you have failed to give a correct exposition of the system of American slavery. To make this more plain if possible: you claim that the principle of slavery is "an essential element in all human governments;" if you include the system of American slavery, then that system can exist wherever human governments exist, and, of course, can exist in all the states in this nation; but there are numerous human governments where it can not exist, being expressly excluded by law, as is the case in all our free states. But if you do not include that system your learned and labored exposition entirely

fails to bring out, in its own proper character, that system for the support of which your book was written.

But, 2. Every honest man must protest against your assumptions in regard to the use of terms and language; and as you are an advocate of "calling things by their right names," by your authority, and in justice to truth, it must be said you have, doubtless inadvertently, not only misapplied terms, but perverted and used them in a sense unauthorized by any standard authors, or conventional arrangements of civilized society. The only apology I can find for you personally, is the imperious demands of the system you attempt to support. According to your lucid exposition, slavery in the *abstract* is "control by the will of another," and in the *concrete* is a "master controlling by his own will, and a slave controlled or serving either by subjection or submission;" and in *every form* of human government where this authority and subordination exists there "is a system of practical slavery!" Now, if this is a correct and authorized use of terms, we are warranted in substituting, in all human governments, the term MASTER—that is, slave-owner; for I shall show presently, beyond controversy, that *ownership is inseparable from slavery*—in place of the name or office of those authorized to control or



govern, and SLAVE in place of those who are subordinate, controlled or governed, and it will make good sense, and be sustained by the standard authorities of the land. For example, you say "*the state*"—that is, each state in this republic—"is a *master*"—slave-owner—and of course each citizen is a *slave*! On the same principle the Government of the United States is the great MASTER—*slave-owner*—and the whole mass of citizens are *slaves*; and as each citizen is under the "control" or government of the great "*master*"—*slave-owner*—the United States, and the smaller "*master*"—*slave-owner*—his own state, instead of being an *honorable* and *free citizen* of this great American republic—whose name is revered on every continent and whose flag is honored on every sea—he is of necessity a *double "slave,"* controlled by two "*masters*"—*slave-owners!!* Again, try this principle on the Government of the United States, the state governments, and the citizens. No man of intelligence will peril his reputation by denying that these governments, throughout their legislative, judicial, and executive departments, recognize distinctly authority in one class of men to "*control,*" and subordination in the others "*to be controlled*" or governed; and that the same men who are at one time "*controlled,*" at another time "*control;*" and those who governed or controlled at one

time are at another time subordinate. Then, go through those instruments—the charter of American freedom—and substitute *master—slave-owner*—where authority to *control* is found, and *slave*, or property, where being controlled or subordination to government is implied, and not only would it not be pure English or common-sense, but all barbarism could not furnish a parallel for jargon and nonsense! But look at this a little further. In the domestic relations parents are masters—*slave-owners*—and the children *slaves—marketable property!* In the business of the country all employers are masters—*slave-owners*—and every one employed is a slave. Hence, to infuse the “*principles of slavery*” into all governments as an “essential and necessary element,” you misapply terms, pervert language, contradict facts, and involve yourself in gross absurdity. Surely nothing less than the potency of cold-hearted error, that is unmoved by any thing its victims may suffer in its defense, could have betrayed one of your abilities into such a hazardous experiment. I charge, however, all your difficulties in defending it upon the system.

Having shown that your definition and learned exposition of slavery have entirely failed to reach the essential character of American slavery, and, also, that you could only reach the conclusions at



which you aimed by a process which will do no honor either to its author or the system he defends, I might here dismiss this point; but it is of sufficient importance to justify some further remarks, as in your plan it is the foundation of all your conclusions. Hence, 3. A most serious objection to your exposition of slavery is its necessary tendency—not to say design—to diminish self-respect, vitiate and degrade the public taste, mind, and morals of the community—the whole nation. A system of slavery, the term *slave*, and a *state of slavery* are, in the language of all civilized countries, inseparably associated with the ideas of *meniality*, *dishonorable*, *degradation*, and kindred ideas in relation to the enslaved. No man of intelligence will, for a moment, question this fact. In our own country it is found in the literature, legislation, politics, business, and social order of the whole country; and no where is the fact more clearly demonstrated than in the south. Your “Philosophy and Practice of Slavery” affords unquestionable testimony that the *idea of slave and menial degradation are absolutely inseparable*.

It is no easy task to dispose of these facts without implicating your “philosophy” in a design to corrupt the public mind by familiarizing it with the *idea* that the system of African slavery is right, since all subordinates, which include the whole

community, are in some form or other a *species of slaves!* With the American idea of slavery it is admitted by all, and none have contended for it more stoutly than yourself, that the slave, under the system, can not be *elevated* to social and political equality with freemen; how, then, can the inference be resisted that your “philosophy of slavery” intends to *bring down* the standard of self-respect and public feeling to “coincide” with the system of slavery? With the present and increasing public feeling against the system, it can no longer exist in peace, if it can be perpetuated for any great length of time at all; but, according to your “philosophy,” it is a divine institution, to exist perpetually; the public mind, therefore, must be brought *down* to harmonize with the system, as the system can not possibly be brought up to harmonize with public feeling and the principle of Christian civilization. Then, according to the principles and language of your philosophy, every subordinate in the whole land, in every relation in life, must be taught and made to know—for you have said “the master should not bear the sword in vain”—that he is a species of *slave*, and in the same degree is the subject of menial degradation; and that every one having authority to govern is a master—*slave-owner*—and is ruling or governing a species of degraded *slaves!* Hence, the lan-

guage and literature of the land must be corrupted and the fountains of legislative, political, social, and domestic order—to say nothing of the purity of the Gospel and the Church—must be *poisoned* with the heresy of your philosophy for the accommodation and defense of the system of American slavery! If all this is not intended, and that a *species of slavery* exists “under all forms of human government,” then this part of your learned labors has no more relevancy to American slavery than if your lectures had been delivered on the geography of the moon!

4. Before dismissing this part of the subject, I shall point out the source of your errors and the ground on which both your philosophy and logic have so strangely blundered.

*First.* You maintain “that every government adapted to fallen beings” . . . “is necessarily a combination of these two opposite elements—the principle of freedom and the principle of slavery.” (Page 48.) Just and wise governments are adapted to men as fallen beings; of course they are included in your proposition. Such governments are invested with authority to “control,” and, according to your philosophy, so far as they control the governed, they are the “*opposite of freedom*,” and contain the *principle of slavery*; but as they do not control the governed in every thing, so far they are the

“*opposite of slavery*” and contain the *principle of freedom*. And as slavery is “control by the will of another,” so far as the citizen is “controlled” by government he is a *slave*, and wherein he is not so “controlled” he is a *freeman*! If this were the fact in regard to government, the unnatural and constantly active “friction” would long since have worn out alike the governments and the governed; and that such results have never followed just and wise governments is no ordinary proof that the philosophy which teaches such doctrine is radically defective. 1. Just human governments are the embodiment, in acknowledged forms, of the *will* of the governed; in establishing which they exercise entire *self-control*. 2. In these forms of government the people, who are the governed, agree, for the general good of the whole, *to do* certain things and *not to do* certain other things. 3. They are precisely as free in the use of self-control in what they agree *not to do*, as they are in what they agree *to do*, and in not doing what they agree to abstain from, as in doing what they engage to perform. 4. They have the same power of self-control to dissolve the relation between the government and the governed that they had to create that relation. 5. So far, therefore, is such government from “embodying the principle of slavery” as an “opposite element to free-

dom," and from being a "master" — *slave-owner*—to "govern by its own will," in opposition to the self-control of the governed—a community of *slaves*—that it is, to all intents and purposes, the agent or servant of the people, created to serve their will and to promote their interests. So obvious are these facts, and potent the great principle they embody, that it has extorted from you—and most unfortunately, too, for your system—the concession of all I claim, and before which your philosophy stands confounded. You say, "If government be, as it undoubtedly is, the agent of the people, and the people choose, they are certainly competent by this agent to free themselves from this institution"—slavery. (Page 13.) Now, Doctor, in this plain statement, which you can neither renounce nor explain away without stultifying yourself, we have the following facts fatal to your philosophy: (1.) Just government is the *agent* of the people. (2.) The people can use this agent as they choose in regard to their "institution." (3.) Instead of this agent being the "master"—*slave-owner*—it is "controlled by the will" of the people, so that if there is any slavery in just and wise governments they are the *slaves* and the people the masters, governing by their own will and self-control, under laws of their own

making. Hence, the assumption that just governments are “necessarily a combination of the opposite principle of *freedom* and the principle of *slavery*” is false, contradictory, and absurd.

*Secondly.* Your philosophy had an ulterior object in view, in this labored effort, to poison all governments with the principle of slavery; namely, to reach the conclusion, at last, that the system of American slavery is founded in the same philosophy of all other governments, human and divine. Now, 1. The inherent difference between the philosophy of just and wise governments and that of the systems of slavery is, that in the former the people—the governed—exercise the power of self-control in forming the government as their “agent”—their servant—and in conceding what they will abstain from doing for the *public good*; and in all other things not conceded to government they are free in the use of the powers God has given them in the improvement of their nature and the promotion of their happiness. 2. What they concede is a mere *fraction* compared with what they retain and exercise without control or restraint. Their concessions are mainly that they will infringe upon no one’s rights, and concede to others what they claim for themselves; and to see that each member performs his concessions for the general good of the whole. 3. In



all such governments, while they do not claim for themselves, neither do they allow any under their authority to claim, hold, or exercise the *right of property in men*; on the contrary, they distinguish humanity as a whole, and each human being in particular, from property, and essentially as the opposite of property of every kind. The philosophy of the slave system—as I shall demonstrate in another place—is based on the principle of the *right of property in the persons of human beings*; consequently, it reverses the whole principle, and not only denies to the governed—the slave—all self-control and excludes him unconditionally from all participancy in making or administering the laws and government by which he is controlled, but it recognizes him as *property*, and places him in the same relation to law that it does a chattel. The difference between the philosophy of just governments and that of the system of slavery is as wide as the poles. The one had its origin in the wisdom, goodness, and justice of God; the other in the depravity, cupidity, and wickedness of men. The one elevates, the other degrades humanity. The one leads to virtue and God, the other to vice and degradation.

*Thirdly.* But, sir, these errors are based on others still more radical lying behind them. 1. You assume that the term *slave* is *generic*, and that



under "every form of government" the different classes of subordinates, or servants, where "control by the will of another" is involved, are so many *species* belonging to the *genus—slave—*or the system of slavery. On this assumption you call the state the "MASTER" of the citizens, and of course they must be a *species* belonging to the genus slave; and also the heads of families are "masters," and their households are species of *slaves* belonging to the same genus; and so of all other superiors—they are *masters* and the subordinates a species of *slaves*. 2. You strangely confound the terms *slave* and *servant*. Referring to "the ancient systems of villenage in England, serfdom in Russia, peon of Mexico, and slavery in the United States," you say, "Each of these systems is pervaded by the *generic* principles or ideas which classify the whole as belonging to the same *genus—system of slavery.*" (Page 40.) Here you distinctly make "slave," "slavery," "system of slavery," a *genus*; and of necessity the various classes or grades of *servants* must be *species* of *slaves* belonging to that *genus*. Again, "Nothing is more certain than this, that the Hebrew Bible—and the same is true of the English translation—speaks of *servants*, *hired* servants, and *bond* servants. The term servant is the *generic* form, and evidently means a person who is controlled by the

will of another.” (Page 142.) In this case, beyond doubt, you make *servant*, or servitude, the *genus*; in the other, *slave*, or *slavery*. It is evident, therefore, that you consider the terms *slave* and *servant* convertible—meaning one and the same thing, or there is a palpable contradiction. In thus confounding terms you pervert and apply them contrary to their acknowledged meaning, use, and application in all civilized countries, and especially in the holy Scriptures, which must be the authoritative standard where moral principle and human rights are as deeply involved as they are in this case. A correct view of the plain philosophical and practical facts will dispel the confusion and darkness which your philosophy has thrown around this otherwise plain question. (1.) *All slaves are servants, but all servants are not slaves.* This fact is recognized in the language and carried out in the practice of all civilized people on earth, and recognized in the Bible with a clearness that defies successful contradiction. (2.) For *slavery*, whether considered metaphorically or literally, in all countries and languages, implies a menial state of privation and degradation; while *servant* is used in the holy Scriptures, and in common language, and referring to the various relations and operations of civilized life, in cases without number, where it would not only be absurd to use the term *slave*,

but would be absolutely false. For example, in our own country—and the same is true of others—it is the acknowledged form of our language, so understood and universally used throughout the nation, that, as a matter of fact, the chief officers of the state and of the nation are the SERVANTS of the people; being subordinates and “controlled by the will” of their constituents, the constitutions and laws of the land. But, so far is this state of servitude—subordination to the popular will, the constitutions and laws of the country—from being one of menial degradation and dishonor, as is absolutely the fact in the case of the *slave*, that it is a position of the highest civil distinction and honor that freemen can enjoy; and to *become a SERVANT* in this sense is the honorable aspiration of men of the brightest talents in the nation. The fact is perfectly obvious that the TERM *servant*, and the *relation* it implies from the degraded slave to the President of the United States, is “pervaded with the *generic* element,” namely, SUBORDINATION, and consequently “control” by owners, masters, superintendents, governors, laws, and constitutions; while each class of subordinates has its own peculiar relation to some one or more of those sources of *authority to control*, which relation constitutes it a *species* belonging to the *genus*—SERVANT. Hence, that *servant*, being a universal term to indi-

cate subordination, is a *genus*; and *slave*, which is limited to a particular class of subordinates, is a *species* belonging to the genus *servant*, is unquestionable. If it were not the fact, we could transpose the proposition and affirm in truth that *all servants are slaves*, but that *all slaves are not servants*. This would be positively *false*, while the contrary is literally *true*. Having demonstrated that men may be subordinates—*servants*, without a particle of the “principle of slavery” entering into that relation, I shall in my next present the *specific character* of slavery as it exists in *fact*.

Yours, respectfully,

J. H. P.

## LETTER III.

THE TRUE DEFINITION AND CHARACTER  
OF SLAVERY.

The true definition of slavery—American slavery—The right of property in the persons of men—The defense contradicts itself, unless it can separate the *man* from the *slave*—The latter is impossible, the former is palpable—The history of slavery sustains the truth of our definition—Any other view makes slaveholders real barbarians—“The philosophy and practice of slavery” *absolutely* irreconcilable with the facts in the case.

REV. W. A. SMITH, D. D.,—Having fully shown, if not to your satisfaction, doubtless to the satisfaction of others more favorably situated to form an impartial judgment in the case, that your exposition of slavery, both in the “abstract” and the “concrete,” is incurably defective; and that your assumption, that “*the principle of slavery is an essential and necessary element in all human government*,” is positively false; and that your position, that as far as men are “controlled” by government they are “slaves,” and, in other respects, they are freemen, is radically erroneous; and that you have entirely failed to present the system of American slavery in its proper light, I now proceed to exhibit that system in its true character as it exists, in *fact*, in this republic.

What, then, is the principle—*the life-giving and sustaining principle*—of slavery proper in general, and of the system of American slavery in particular? The true answer will dispel the awe, mystery, and claim to the special providence of God in its support, which your philosophy has thrown around it, and will reveal it in a character far less attractive than that in which you have labored to dress it for public exhibition. The answer is, “The vast mine of principle—pure, essential truth—that underlies” the system of slavery in general, and the American system in particular, is that of the *principle* or IDEA of property, money, wealth—with its “correlatives,” honor, power, and gratification, which money procures—IN THE PERSON OF HUMAN BEINGS. This is the “*abstract*” principle of slavery—American slavery. Slavery in the “concrete,” is that system established and in practical operation in a community or state by custom or code of laws, *which gives men the right of property in the persons—soul and body—of human beings*; and which places them, to all intents and purposes, *under the laws of property*, and that gives their owner all the power of law over their persons as his property or money that it does over any other species of property having a money value. I shall not be careful to discuss these points—the principle and the practice of slavery—



separately, for, in fact, they are generally inseparable. If this definition and statement of the system of slavery be correct, it is clearly demonstrable that your presentation of the subject is entirely erroneous; and that such is the fact I proceed to show.

*First.* I need not quote any particular law of the south to prove that the system authorizes the holding of human beings as *property*, for the entire slave code rests on the *principle* that the *master*, as *owner*, has a legal and indefeasible *right of property* in the *soul and body of the slave* as a "chattel, to all intents and purposes whatsoever, in the hands of his owner." It is by virtue of this *right of property* in the *person* of the slave that the master can buy, sell, mortgage, give, or gamble away the *persons* of men, women, and children; and the slave system of laws authorize and protect him in all this, precisely as they do in dealing in, and disposing of, any other kind of property—as mules and horses! These are facts of public notoriety, spread out on the statute-books, and carried out in the common practice, of all the slaveholding states in the Union.

*Secondly.* You have distinctly conceded this point. You say, "And it is certain that the tenth article of this constitution—the decalogue—provides to protect the *right of property* in slaves."



Again: "Thus we find that the Jewish constitution provided to protect the *right of property* in the servants or slaves, in the generic sense;" . . . . "Hebrews, in given circumstances, for a definite period; and . . . the neighboring heathen *in perpetuity*." (Pages 142-3.) Further, "The duty of masters to their slaves, considered as *their money*." (Page 284.) And that there might be no mistake in regard to this *right of property in slaves* being perpetual, and to rebuke any who should have the temerity to differ from the dogmas of your philosophy, you add: "Now, to assume that God provided in this constitution"—the decalogue—"to protect in all time to come (for it is allowed to embody immutable principles) a relation"—master as owner, and slave as property—"which was, in itself, *an iniquity*, is more than a mere absurdity—*it is profanity*." (Page 139.) True, you have labored with commendable zeal in refuting Channing, Whewell, and others, when they say, "Slavery converts a person into a thing—a subject merely passive, without any of the recognized attributes of human nature;" . . . . "he is divested of his moral nature," etc. (Page 146.) You have clearly shown the absurdity of these views, if taken literally; but most of your readers will think you have lost your time and labor in refuting what no one either believed or taught;

namely, that a slave is *literally* changed into a "brute." But all this fails to touch the real question—*is the money value of slavery its only principle of being and life?* However, in coming into the neighborhood of this issue, your philosophy evidently became agitated, and has given us a singular specimen of contradiction and confusion; for, in opposition to the property principle of the slavery system, you say, "The right of property in man, as man, is no where taught in Scripture, although it distinctly recognizes the relation of master and slave. The right which the master has in the slave, according to the Scriptures, is *not to the man*, but to so much of his time and labor as is consistent with his rights of humanity." (Page 150.) That, in making God the author of a system of involuntary, perpetual slavery, under which the owner has, and by divine authority is, protected in the *right of property* in slaves, and in attempting to defend this system against rational objections, you have in fact contradicted yourself, is obvious to even superficial observers.

1. You affirm that God has provided, on "immutable principles," to "protect the *right of property* in slaves in perpetuity." But slaves are men; therefore he has provided to protect the right of property perpetually in men. 2. You assert, which no doubt is the fact, that "the right of prop-

erty in man, as man, is no where taught in Scripture." Then it follows beyond the power of evasion, either, (1.) The slave in whom his owner has, by divine appointment, a perpetual right of property, is not a man; or, (2.) That the slave, who is identically the man himself, can be separated from the man and be recognized in law, and in all other respects, as property, and be treated as such; while the man can be separated from the slave and be recognized in law, and in all respects treated as a freeman; or, (3.) That your positions are not only absolutely irreconcilable, but in deadly hostility to each other! If it be true that God has authorized—as you say in the Jewish constitution—and protects the right of property in slaves, it is not true that "the Scriptures no where teach" that doctrine; or, if it is the fact that the Scriptures no where teach such right, it "is more than a mere absurdity—it is *profanity*," to assert, as your philosophy does, that God has ordained, authorized, and protects the right of property in *slaves*; for it is positively impossible to separate the *slave* from the *man*. You will not affirm the first, that the slave is not a man. It will be too humiliating to your philosophy, and too perilous to your reputation as a Christian scholar and divine, to admit the *contradiction* in the third; consequently, there is no relief for your philosophy but to attempt to

maintain the second—*separate* the *man* from the *slave!* Your philosophy appears to have had some “premonitory symptoms” of difficulties ahead, and to have taken some precautionary measures. Hence, you say, “The right which the master has in the slave, according to the Scriptures, is *not to the man*, but to so much of his time and labor as is consistent with his rights of humanity.” This is a refinement—a mere “fiction”—which has long served the double purpose of concealing the real character of slavery, and of quieting the consciences of many who have serious scruples as to the morality of the system. The “Old Dominion” has long since acquired a historical notoriety for her doctrine of “*abstractions*” on other subjects, but this application of it to the system of slavery is justly entitled to a new name, which, not unaptly, might be called an “*abstraction abstracted from abstractions!*” The supreme absurdity, that the *slave* can be separated from the *man*, while both are one and indivisible, has to be demonstrated, or the truth of my position conceded, and slavery taken out of the record of the Scriptures, according to your own showing. But you, and all other pro-slavery advocates, have, up to this day, failed to give us the process—the *modus operandi*—of separating the slave from the man, or the man from the slave. And, although I have a right to de-

mand the process, or that you should abandon the position, I will not embarrass a personal friend by pressing the latter, nor by requiring him to perform an impossibility in the former. "The master has no right of property to the *man*, but to his *time* and *labor*." "Time and labor," considered in reference to the agency of man, are *relative* terms. *They have no abstract, separate, or independent existence apart from the man.* They can not, by any possibility whatever, have an existence only in inseparable connection with man. The labor is the *effect*, and in this case the man is the *cause*; and it would not be more absurd to suppose an actually-existing effect without any cause to produce it, than to suppose the existence of the labor of a man without the man to perform such labor. The right of property in labor already performed, and the time requisite to perform it, is an utter impossibility. Both are passed, and have no more being *now* than if they never had existed. Hence, the right of property in labor already performed is a right in that which has no existence, and which never can have a being hereafter. The right of property in the effects of, or what has been produced by labor already performed is an entirely different matter. The merchant, the farmer, the mechanic—every citizen has a right of property in that which labor performed has produced, while



they have not now, and never had, the right of property in either the men, their time, or labor, who performed the work. The right of property in labor to be performed in the *future*, unless it includes absolute *power over the man* who is to perform it so as to compel its performance, is the right of property in that which has *not now*, and *never may have an existence!* This would be the right of property in a mere phantom; and if slavery had no other foundation the whole system would perish in an hour. Therefore, the modest "right of property in the time and labor of the slave," includes the *absolute power of the owner over the whole man*—soul, body, and spirit—to *compel unremunerated* labor during the entire life of the man! and yet the system and your philosophy have the effrontery to insult common-sense with the assertion that the "master has no right of property in the slave, as a man, but only in his time and labor;" which, by absolute necessity, includes the whole man as the slave!! I am surprised that a man of your intelligence would involve yourself in such absurdities. Put "so much of the time and labor of the slave as is consistent with his rights of humanity," into the slave market without the slave himself, if this were possible, and propose to sell the right of property in them, to the *exclusion* of the person—the whole "humanity"—of the slave, and



tell the purchaser—tell the world, this is the true character of the system of American slavery! Why, sir, every slave-dealer in the land would cease to admire you as a philosopher, if he did not look upon you as a lunatic!!

What are the facts of the case as exhibited in the practical operations of the system? You can scarcely look into a southern secular newspaper without being met by advertisements for the sale of slaves of almost every age, character, and sex. Do they propose to sell the “right of property” in the time and labor of slaves, to the exclusion of or apart from the *identical persons of the slaves*? Your honesty and good sense must answer at once in the negative. The labor is a contingency, the *man* is a reality. The reality can exist without the contingency, but the contingency can never occur without the reality. As the slave labor can have no possible existence apart from the *slave*, and as the slave can not exist apart from the *man*, and as the man can not perform the labor without the *physical, moral, and intellectual* elements of humanity, slave labor can have existence only as it is inseparably connected with these essential elements of human nature, without which man would cease to be man. Consequently, the right of property can only be in the *person* of the *slave* as *man*, and a reality in possession, and because he is man and

capable of performing man's labor; while the labor is a mere accident, and optional with owners whether they will exact it or put the slave—"the man as man"—into the market and make their profits by the sale of his person—soul and body. The entire operation of the slave system is a practical, public, authoritative refutation of the sickly—not to say contemptible—apology for slavery, in attempting to separate the *right of property* in the *time and labor* of the *slave* from the man—the entire humanity of the man himself! The slave system in this country, as a matter of fact spread out before the civilized world, places the slave—the man—with all that constitutes his humanity, under the *laws of property*, and compels him to perform all the functions of property. The man—his person—is bought, sold, bequeathed, paid on debts, executed for debts, and in every other way used as an article of commerce or trade at the will and for the benefit of his owner, precisely as is the horse or the mule!! In the light of these facts your strange position and that of your system can be accounted for only on the principle that imperceptibly you have been so far "controlled by the will of another"—your philosophy of slavery—that you have been betrayed into logical and philosophical absurdities, which, under other circumstances, you would sedulously avoid, if not indeed heartily

detest. Having demonstrated, from the philosophical necessity of the case, the impossibility of separating the *time* and *labor* from the *man*, from the slave laws, and the universal practice under those laws, and from your own positions—that “the decalogue provides for and protects the right of property in slaves—that the great central principle of the system of American slavery is *the right of property in man*, including his whole humanity—his capacity, physical and mental, to labor as the visible, tangible reality in possession, and his labor as a contingency—it is perfectly clear that the whole idea and principle of the system of slavery is resolved into that of *property, money, wealth in* THE PERSONS OF HUMAN BEINGS; and that it is this property and money value which sustains the whole system, and that gives it life, energy, practical power, and influence, and *without which* it could not survive an hour. Now, this is either literally *true* or it is *not true*. You, and the entire pro-slavery school, have either to *admit* or *deny* its truth. To allow its correctness would be an entire abandonment of the false assumption that “the principle of slavery is an essential element in all governments;” and as you have affirmed, what is strictly true, that “the Scriptures no where teach the right of property in man,” and as the impossibility of separating “time and labor” from the

*man* has been demonstrated, such an admission would take slavery wholly out of the record of the Scriptures, and totally ruin your whole scheme of "philosophy and practice of slavery," and leave you with no more right to claim the special providence of God in regard to the system, than in any other money-making business, whether a righteous or wicked business.

But as it would be unnatural for a kind parent to abandon his admired offspring at any time, and especially in its tender age, before it had acquired strength to walk, I must suppose that you *deny* that *the property and money value* of the system of American slavery is its *sole* sustaining and life-giving power and principle, without which it would immediately terminate. I regret that you overlooked or evaded this vital principle of the system throughout the whole course of your learned lectures on the subject of American slavery. Then you must maintain that the system of slavery, as organized and in practical operation in the slaveholding states in this republic, could retain its practical organization and efficiency, succeed and prosper, in the entire absence and total exclusion of the *property and money value of the system*. With the intelligent and unprejudiced the simple statement of the case will stand as its unanswerable refutation. But as various causes may operate to

prevent an impartial judgment, a few remarks may be submitted, not to convince scholars or philosophers, but others less informed.

*First.* The whole history of slavery in this country testifies to the truth that *the right of property in the person of the slave is the soul, life, and power of the system.* At the time the general government was formed all the states in the Union—or all except one or two—were slaveholding states; but in the northern states it was found that, in consequence of soil, climate, and the peculiarity of slave labor, the system was losing its money value, and that it would be more profitable to make investments in other kinds of property. Slavery, therefore, precisely as it declined in its property and money value, was driven from the north. On the other hand, as the south discovered that slave labor was highly profitable, it increased the property and commercial value of the system, and its power has been and still is concentrating there. The same incontrovertible fact is being exemplified on the northern borders of those slaveholding states bordering on the free states. From various causes the system is losing its commercial value, and is becoming unproductive. The practical result is, it is melting away every day from those regions, and thousands of citizens are anxious to get rid of the system, without any reference to its



moral character, but simply because they can make more money in other business than raising, buying, selling, and working slaves. The potency of those historical facts is resistless.

*Secondly.* It is an essential element in the laws of political economy that every system of business must produce more than it costs in the process of carrying it on, or it must terminate in hopeless bankruptcy. Its net profits are its very life and continued being, without which it must be a total failure. This is as literally true of the system of slavery as of any other business on earth. Had its cost annually exceeded its income, the states where it now flourishes and constitutes their wealth, would long since have been bankrupt and the system abolished by self-destruction.

*Thirdly.* If the system of slavery can live, succeed, and prosper without its commercial character—the *absolute right of property in the person of the slave*—then the practical operations of slavery are unjust, cruel, and barbarous: unjust, in holding *as property* and in appropriating all the unremunerated labor of millions of human beings, for the benefit of their owners, when the system does not require it, and could live, prosper, and do all the good that is claimed for it, without this commercial value, and absolute property relation and character: cruel, in treating their *persons* as



property, and in extorting this labor at the sacrifice of the comfort, honor, domestic relations, and happiness, and all the rights of humanity, in the case of the unpaid laborers, while there is no possible necessity for this oppression, if the right of property in the person of the slave is not the essential life of the system: barbarous, in shutting out from the minds of the enslaved the light of education, science, and literature, and withholding the effective means of Christian civilization from millions of immortal beings, as the only means of exacting from them the unrequited labor of slaves, for the sole gratification and benefit of their owners—when the system requires no such privations and sacrifices, if its commercial value is not its only life. If it be true that the soul and life of the system *is not* its property and money value, I turn your attention to the ingenuous and energetic organization, and the powerful and perpetual working of the system, with all its tears, sweat, and blood; with all its grief and anguish; with all its ravages in the domestic relations which God has ordained; with all the revolting scenes of the public slave-market, where husbands, wives, parents, children, and relatives are all torn asunder, and sold to the highest bidder, and all for the purpose of developing, possessing, and enjoying the property and money value of the system—and ask

you, as a philanthropist, a Christian, a philosopher, what becomes of the peculiarly *high degree of civilization* and refinement that you claim for the supporters of the slave system? The whole system, in its premises, and its practical working in the world with those who maintain it, assume a character of revolting barbarism, if its money value is not absolutely essential to its very being!!

In closing this letter I ask your special attention to two points: *First*. The irreconcilable difference between our definitions and exposition of the system of slavery. You make the “principle of slavery an essential element in all governments, and without it government is no government at all.” I have clearly shown that it is a mere contingency of government, that may or may not exist just as the legislative power determine, as is fully demonstrated in our own republic—some of the states totally excluding it, others retaining, or rather introducing and sustaining it under their governments. You define slavery, in its practical character, to consist in “the relation of master and slave,” and “control by the will of another;” that is, the master controlling the slave by his own will. I have demonstrated that the *principle of slavery is the right of property* in the person, soul, body, and spirit, of the slave, and that the authority of the master to “control” him as a slave is

founded, not on the principle that slavery is "an essential element in all governments," but alone in the right of property given him by special law in the person of the slave. You have attempted to sustain your positions by a mass of metaphysical and philosophical speculations: I have sustained mine by your own concessions, and by facts which defy evasion or successful contradiction.

*Second.* The distinction between *slave* as a *species* and *servant* as a *genus* is demonstrable. The power of the master to control the slave by his own will is based alone on his right of property in the person of the slave; divest him of that right and he has no authority to control him as a slave, nor in any other sense; while the authority to control other servants rests wholly on other grounds than that of the *right of property in the person of the servant* or subordinate. Children may be considered as a species belonging to the genus servant, but the right to control them is based on paternal relations and the laws of God. Apprentices are a species belonging to the same genus, and as such are "controlled by the will of another;" but the right to control them rests on mutual agreement and reciprocal interest, and *not* in the right of property in their persons as in the case of slaves. So clerks, government officers, and employés of every class. Although they are

subordinates and controlled by others, in no instance is this control based on *the right of property in their persons*, while that *right* is the sole ground of control under the system of slavery.

Hoping soon to resume this subject, I remain,  
yours,

J. H. P.

## LETTER IV.

SUBORDINATES UNDER JUST GOVERNMENTS  
ARE NOT SLAVES.

The falsity of the philosophy of slavery demonstrated by the facts in the general government of the United States—And the state governments—Particularly that of the slaveholding states refutes the “philosophy”—God has excluded slavery from all the relations he has ordained, and the governments he has formed, for human society—Under just governments subordinates are parties in forming their relations—The system of slavery allows no such right—Just governments protect the reciprocal rights of subordinates and superiors—Slavery provides no such protection, but degrades the slave to a level with the beast—Just governments elevate their subjects—The system of slavery depresses and ruins its victims.

REV. DR. W. A. SMITH,—As promised, I resume the question at issue between us. And as your third lecture—“OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED”—contains nothing bearing on the subject now before us—the true character of American slavery—and as I do not deem it necessary to defend Dr. Wayland, whom you mainly attack, I shall pass it without any particular notice here and pursue the main question. Now, sir, in view of the facts already presented, you will not dare to affirm that the system of slavery could exist in this country if the laws did not recognize the slave, to all in-

tents and purposes, as *property* in the hands of his owner. The man who would make the assertion could only be the object of pity or contempt. With this fact so fully developed that, in spite of the mysteries of your philosophy, the most ordinary mind can not fail to see it and fully to feel its force, I ask your attention while I demonstrate, in the light of facts equally clear, the blindness and perversity of your philosophy on this subject, and consequently the impotency of the whole foundation of your magnificent temple of perpetual involuntary slavery.

You tell us "the true philosophical definition of the principle [of slavery] is *control by the will of another*, with its correlative—subjection, or submission—implied." . . . "The whole of the abstract idea of the system of slavery is to be found in the terms *master* and *slave* in correlation; and *submission and subjection to control by the will of another*." (Page 45.) You say this principle of slavery is "an essential element in *every form* of human government;" and that "no government can be appropriate to human beings" . . . "that does not embody this generic element" of slavery. (Page 47.) And, "a government that did not embody the *principle of slavery* would be no government at all." (Page 48.) Still further, "God has rendered the blessing of civil freedom



inseparable from the presence and operation of the principle of slavery." (Page 50.) The above, which is not a tithe of what you say to the same effect, can not be misunderstood in regard to the following points: 1. Control by the will of another, with its correlatives, master and slave, with submission or subjection on the part of the slave implied, embodies the whole principle of slavery; and that slavery in the "*concrete*" is this principle, with its correlatives implied, carried out in practice. 2. Any government containing this element embodies the principle of slavery, and "without it would be no government at all." 3. But all governments embody this principle as an "essential and necessary element, without which they would not be governments." 4. Therefore, slavery, and of course the system of slavery as it exists in the south, is based on the true philosophy of government and the essential constitution of man and of human society. I am sure that your doctrines under this head have neither been misunderstood nor misstated; this is demonstrable by supposing the *contrary* of the above propositions and conclusion; and now, Doctor, precisely on this ground the whole strength of your philosophy fails you, not only because it is not sustained by facts, but because unquestionable facts refute your whole philosophical scheme on this subject. I have shown

already, beyond the power of your logic to refute or evade, or of your moral courage to deny, that "control by the will of another, with its correlatives," is a contingency—a mere accident of slavery; and that the true vital principle of slavery lies back of control by the will of another, and is based on the *right of property* which the system gives the master in *the person*—soul, body, and spirit—of the slave; and that it is this right of property in the premises that invests the master—owner, with authority to control the slave by his own will; and that without this right of property such control—compelling involuntary, perpetual, unpaid labor, such as the slave is subjected to in the south—would be deemed, throughout the civilized world, an outrage against justice and humanity deserving universal execration and the most exemplary punishment the laws could inflict.

I am fully aware that this fact, that slavery is based alone upon the right of property in the person of the slave, may greatly trouble you, because it must prove fatal to your whole theory; and, however I may sympathize with you as a friend, I shall bring your philosophy to the light, and analyze it in the face of the fact, though it should not survive the operation. "Better one suffer than many!" 1. The system of slavery is based on the *right of property*, which the *laws* give the *mas-*

ter in the *person of the slave*, and without such legal right he would have no authority to own, hold, or control the slave as a slave. 2. That government, whether human or divine, which *does not* invest the government or governor, or by whatever name either may be called, with the legal *right of property* in the *person* of the governed, by whatsoever name they may be designated, nor place such governed or subordinates under the laws as property or chattels, *does not contain one particle of the element or principle of slavery*. 3. But no government founded in the principles of justice, regarding the rights of man, and approved of God, invests the government or governor with the right of property in the governed, authorizing such subordinates to be placed under the laws of property, and to be treated as chattels in the hands of their owners. Therefore, 4. The true philosophy of government, the rights of man, and the genius of human society utterly exclude the elements and principles of slavery. You may object that "in this statement I beg the question as to the character of *just government*;" I, however, will in due time evince the truth of the position, if not to your satisfaction, yet beyond the power of your philosophy to resist or of your logic to refute. You say, "Government must place its subjects under the operation of the principle of slavery in

some things, the more effectually to secure their practical freedom in other things. And the citizen who may be determined not to submit to this order of things, and shall persist to do, from the action of a depraved will, what the state—*his master*—says he shall not do, will, sooner or later, find himself reduced to a condition of most abject slavery, within the walls of a public prison.” (Page 50.) The punishment of offenders against the just authority of the state is not the question now before us; nor am I here discussing the government suited to minors, but the philosophy or principle of government in general, and its true relation to the system of slavery in particular. The utter fallacy—indeed absurdity—of your assumption that governments “necessarily” embody the “antagonistic” principles of freedom, “self-control,” and slavery—“control by the will of another”—has been clearly shown; and, also, that the subjects of just governments are as free in conceding what they *will do*, and what they will *not do*, for the good of the whole, as they are in reserving to themselves the full power of self-control in what they have not conceded to government; and that, in your language, “government is the agent of the people,” *controlled in the premises by their will*; consequently, “that all governments *derive their JUST POWERS from THE WILL of*

THE GOVERNED. Notwithstanding the clearness with which all this has been evinced, I can afford to waive it for the present, and to give your philosophy all that it can in reason claim, till I test its truthfulness by the standard of *facts*. I will admit what you claim, with all the force that truth will allow, that the "state is our master," "controlling" the citizens "by the will of another;" and to place this question out of the reach of misconception, and so that every one can judge, will take the government of the United States for an example. I shall not be particular in defining this "great *master*"—SLAVE-OWNER—the general government, other than to give it the broadest application and greatest force. In this sense it includes the Constitution of the United States and the laws of Congress; the President, his cabinet, and all the federal officers throughout the republic, as the executives of the will of the government. And now, sir—however its provisions and object may have been, or may yet be, prostituted by the slavery power and influence—if your philosophy is sound, there certainly does exist some clear and unmistakable analogous points between this great "MASTER," and the slave "*masters*," and the system of slavery in the south.

But where can those points of agreement be found? The essential principles of the two sys-



tems are immutable opponents—*eternal antagonists!* 1. The general government had its *origin* in the will of the people, and derives all its just powers from the consent of the governed. The system of slavery had its origin in the will of the masters, independent of the will or consent of the governed—the slaves. 2. The former is administered by the will of the governed—the people—through their representatives chosen by themselves. The latter is administered—not unfrequently in tears and blood in the case of its subjects—not only independent of, but in direct opposition to, the will of the governed—the slaves. 3. The general government is so fully under the control of the governed—the people—that they can modify or change it when they please, or, if they choose, can abolish it and substitute another in its place. Under the slave system the governed—the slaves—have no control over it or the manner of its administration, however cruel; no power to modify or abolish it, unless it should be by physical force in revolution and blood. 4. The general government was instituted—among other things—“to establish *justice*, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of *liberty* to ourselves and our posterity.” The system of slavery was established in open violation of the principles of *justice*, and with the express design to *deprive* millions of



our fellow-men—made by the same God, redeemed by the same blood, and destined, if pious, to the same heaven with ourselves—of the “*blessings of liberty*,” and their unoffending “*posterity*” after them! Where is the analogy? Where is the principle of slavery—the right of property in the person of man as a chattel—as an “*essential element*” in the general government of this republic, and “without which it would be no government at all?” Here are facts as irrefutable as that of your own existence, in the light of which your philosophy will scarcely escape the contempt of the intelligent as a gross caricature of the *true philosophy* of government and of the great charter of American liberty and human rights.

But, Rev. Doctor, your philosophy is too impertinent in its claims to be dismissed till further corrected. And, 1. As has been demonstrated, the slave system has its sole existence in the *right of property in the person of the slave*, vested in the master; but does the general government claim or possess the *right of property* in the *persons* of the governed—the citizens of this republic? 2. The system of slavery places the persons of the slaves, to all intents and purposes, under the laws of property, and treats them in all respects as property, wholly for the use and benefit of their owners; but does the government of the United States

place the governed under the laws of property and treat them as such, using them wholly for the benefit of the "*master*"—the government? 3. Under the slave system, by virtue of the ownership vested in the master, the slave, without the violation of any law, human or divine, can be—and frequently is—violently torn from the privileges and enjoyments of domestic relations, paid on debts, sold by the sheriff, bid off at auction, loaded with chains, thrust into loathsome prisons, and punished at the will of the owner, the master! Does the general government possess, claim, or exercise any such ownership, right of property, or any power whatever to treat its *unoffending* citizens—the governed—in the way slaves are treated?

Now, sir, in the light of these facts your philosophy stands convicted as a miserable impostor, possessing no power, only to mislead and pervert the minds of those who receive it as truth. The reasons are obvious; for the contrast between the *rude philosophy* of slavery and the *true philosophy* of just governments is perfect. 1. The *former* has its very existence in the *right of property* in the *persons* of human beings—the slaves. The *latter* not only does not possess any *such right*, but utterly repudiates, abhors, and detests such claims. The *former* recognizes the

persons of slaves as property, puts them wholly under the laws of property, treats and uses them as such. The *latter* recognizes the governed as citizens, and treats them as such in opposition to, and as distinguished from, all property of every kind. 3. The *former* can live only by the *destruction* of the *liberties* of human beings—the enslaved and their posterity after them; has established its whole system for that especial object—and whenever it shall cease this unnatural and unholy work of destruction it will terminate its own existence. The *latter* can only live by maintaining the liberties of its citizens—the governed—against all slavery; and should it ever cease this glorious work of maintaining liberty against oppression it will sink into the barbarism of slavery, provoke revolution, and incur the curse that now hangs over that system. “*The principle of slavery is an essential element in all governments, and without it a government would be no government at all!*” Why, sir, a more palpable falsity could scarcely be uttered. It is contradicted by universal fact, and to attempt to dignify it with the name of sound philosophy is little less than an insult to common-sense. I might here safely leave your philosophy to its fate, which, doubtless, in the end will be any thing but flattering to its author; but,

as you have made it the foundation of your whole superstructure of slavery, I will not dismiss it without further exposing its fallacy.

I turn your attention to *facts* belonging to other forms of government; namely, that of the several states within this republic. Here, also, the facts are most fatal to your philosophy, and so clear that a brief notice is all that is necessary under this head. *First.* Keeping steadily before the mind the fact that the system of slavery has its being alone in the right of property in the person of the enslaved, and in the destruction of their liberties, and of all domestic, social, and political *rights*, I ask, where is the state in this Union whose government possesses, or claims a particle of such right, in the persons of its citizens who are the subjects of its governing power? Here, as in the case already examined, so far is the government from possessing the least possible *right of property in the persons of the governed*, or a particle of power to put them as goods and chattels under the laws governing property, that these governments are framed, maintained, and administered with direct reference to the *opposite principle*—to distinguish the governed from all kinds of property, and to protect them in the acquisition and enjoyment of property as freemen, in opposition to the degradation of slavery. *Secondly.*

There are no forms of human government which more clearly sustain these facts, and refute your philosophy, than those of the southern slaveholding states. Under those state governments, what is it that constitutes that vast difference in the condition of the *free* citizen and the degraded *slave*? Surely it is not in mere color; for there are some black men there who are free, and some who are as white as you, or your reviewer, who are slaves. Nor can it be the difference alone in intellect, for not a few who are enslaved have more mind than their masters. What then makes this painful difference? Before this question your philosophy is more dumb than the apostate prophet's ass; and if it should speak, and were allowed to utter the truth, like that abused beast it would rebuke—if not “the madness of the prophet”—the follies and errors of a Christian philosopher, for prostituting his noble powers in attempting to prop up and defend a sinking system of detestable tyranny, and human oppression, and injustice!

I will not, however, increase your embarrassment by pressing an answer to this interrogatory, but will again turn your attention to facts; namely, that, in those states referred to, there are two classes or departments of organic and statute laws which, *in fact*, constitute *two systems of government*. One provides for and secures to a portion



of the population, generally called citizens, all the rights—domestic, social, civil, religious, and political—of *freemen* in contradistinction from slaves and property of all descriptions. The other divests another portion of the population, termed slaves, of all those rights and privileges, and recognizes and treats them as *property*, as contradistinguished from citizens and freemen. A single specimen is all that need be cited here. The laws of Louisiana provide: “A slave is one who is in the power of a master to whom he belongs. The master may sell him, dispose of his person, his industry, and his labor; he can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire any thing but what must belong to his master.” (*Civil Code, Article 35.*) “Slaves shall be deemed, sold, taken, reputed, and adjudged in law, to be chattels personal in the hands of their owners and possessors, and their executors, administrators, and assigns, to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatever.” (*Stroud, page 23. Elliott on Slavery, Vol. I, page 16.*)

In the one case, the system is based on the *true philosophy* that governments possess no particle of right of property in the persons of the governed, nor of power to place them under the laws of property, or to treat them in any respect as chattels. In the other, the entire system is founded in the



*false and barbarous* philosophy of the right of property in the persons of the governed, and the power of placing them under the laws of property, and of treating human beings in every respect as chattels and articles of merchandise. The one is the eternal antipode of slavery, by excluding all right of property in the person of man. The other embodies the whole principle of slavery in asserting that right and treating men as chattels and beasts of burden!! If it were necessary further to demonstrate the falsity of your philosophy, we have only to expunge from southern laws those provisions which recognize the right of property in the persons of slaves, and to put them under that department of southern law which excludes this element of property in man, and which protects the governed in all the rights of freemen. Such an operation would entirely exterminate slavery where it now exists. Hence, it is seen beyond the possibility of mistake, even in the light of southern governments and institutions themselves, that so far is it from being a fact that "the principle of slavery is an *essential element* in all governments," that all that department of government in the slaveholding states, which refers to the *free white* population, absolutely excludes the only principle on which slavery can exist—the *right of property in the person of the governed*;

and that in the south the system of slavery depends wholly for its very existence on special legislative provisions, creating this right of property in the persons of men, women, and children as slaves, and placing them under the laws of property as goods and chattels. How is it, sir, or why did you overlook these stubborn facts in writing your book? Dear Doctor, in the face of these facts it can not escape your notice, if it has heretofore, that, instead of the principle and operation of slavery being an essential element in all governments, even the south has practically and totally refuted your false philosophy in all her forms of government pertaining to her citizens; and that the system of slavery, as a "*peculiar institution*" and an exception to the character of just government, has been unnaturally forced upon the system of southern government by the cupidity and depravity of ungodly men. And to-day, in the eyes of the civilized world, the institution of slavery stands out as a monstrous deformity of the southern system of otherwise sound and just government—a putrescent excrescence fastened upon a noble, manly, and otherwise healthy body; and, unless all history is a fable, human nature ceases to be what it always has been, and God forgets his justice, this vicious protuberance must be speedily removed by skillful hands from the *body-politic*, or it will not

only destroy health, but inevitably in the end result in death! It can scarcely fail to be a matter of mortification, that even the institutions of the south should be a standing refutation of the "*Philosophy of Slavery*" of one of her most gifted sons. But such is, and ever will be, the fact while southern laws and government recognize and protect one class of the population as *free citizens*, because no being on earth has a right of property in their persons, and at the same time recognize the right of property in the persons of another portion of the population, and in every respect treat and use them as "chattels personal in the hands of their owners!" I would here dismiss your philosophy, were it not that you have not only made it the principal material in the foundation of the temple of slavery, but the basis of your moral science, on which the "text-books" in southern literature, if not the whole country, are hereafter to be formed.

I shall here bring its claims to higher authority than the institutions and government of men; namely, the authority of God as expressed in those relations which he has established in human society expressing or implying government. 1. In referring to the origin of man and human government, you say, "Now of these two created beings"—the first man and woman—"one was placed

in direct and immediate subordination to the other." You quote Paul in proof. "I suffer not a woman to usurp authority over the man;" 1 Tim. ii, 12; "but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law." 1 Cor. xiv, 34. (Pages 65, 66.) To give your position all the strength possible, I quote the "law" referred to. God said to the woman, "And thy desire shall be to thy husband"—or, as the margin reads, *subject to thy husband*—"and he shall rule over thee." Gen. iii, 16. Here is the commencement of government in human society in man's fallen state, as also the specific relations for the regulation of which this government was ordained of God. I readily admit that it clearly expresses on the one hand authority to rule, and subordination on the other, and that it implies "control by the will of another, with submission or subjection;" but I deny that it contains the least particle of the element or principle of slavery in its composition or character. In proof you have only to be reminded that the fact has been fully demonstrated, that any system of government which *does not* recognize the *right of property in the persons of the governed*, nor place them under the laws of property as chattels, does absolutely repudiate and positively exclude the entire principle of slavery, which has no other existence than in such right, which gives it the power

to use human beings as chattel property. Now, sir, unless you will affirm that, in this first form of human government, God gave the husband—with the authority to rule—the right of property in the subordinate—his wife—and also the power to place her as a chattel in his hands, under the laws of property, and use her as an article of merchandise, your philosophy, which asserts that the “principle of slavery is an essential element in all governments, and that without it a government would be no government at all,” must stand utterly confounded before the truth of God. And should you so affirm, divine truth, which declares that the husband and wife “shall be one flesh,” and that the husband “shall love, cherish, and treat his wife as himself,” would involve you personally in the same absurdities with your blind philosophy! To assume or assert that this first form of government, ordained of Heaven for the benefit of man, contains the “presence and operation of the principle of slavery” would be little less than “profanity,” and would be literally false. 2. The *relation* which God has established between *parent* and *children* involves the same principles of authority and subordination, and a correspondent government, as that of husband and wife; and, on examination, the results will be precisely the same.

In this relation the authority of parents to con-



trol and govern is unquestionable; and the obligation of children, while minors, to submit and obey is equally clear. Here, also, is a species of *government* established by the authority of God, in which there does not exist the least particle of the only principle on which slavery can have a being in the civilized world—the absolute legal right of property in the persons of the subordinates, and the authority and power to use them in the market as merchandise, as slaves are used wherever the system of property in human beings exists by custom or law. God has given parents no such right, authority, or power, in or over their children in this department of human government. Here again your philosophy is a signal failure; and this case is too plain to require further elucidation. 3. One other instance in which the Divine arrangement convicts your philosophy of fallacy and misrepresentation will be noticed. God has ordained a system of government for his Church and people in this world. The New Testament contains the authoritative constitution or organic law of that government; but it is left to the wisdom and prudence of godly men to make such rules and regulations, within the provisions of that constitution, as to adapt it to the people and circumstances where it is administered, and to render it an efficient government for the purposes for which it



was instituted. It embodies distinctly the principles of *control* and of *submission*; the chief officers are *officially* the superiors, and the membership the subordinates. But does it on that account contain—as your philosophy teaches—the “essential principle of slavery?” Is either the government or the governors invested with the right of property in the persons of the governed—the membership—and with authority to put them under the laws of property, and to supply the slave-market with them as articles of merchandise, and as “chattels in the hands of their owners?” To answer affirmatively would be folly, falsehood, and profanity! And, however unpleasant it may be to you, and fatal to your philosophy, I repeat that the system of slavery can not possibly exist, and must absolutely perish, without these vested rights of property in the slaves, and the power to use the persons of men, women, and children as property in the market. And unless God should revoke the principles of government he has established in reference to the relations of husband and wife, parents and children, and his own Church, these facts will remain an unanswerable and perpetual refutation of your false philosophy of the principle of slavery! I have already exposed the capital blunder in your whole scheme, in your defining slavery to be “controlled by the will of another,

with submission or subjection;" and have also shown that it is a mere accident of the system, and that the institution can have no existence apart from legal ownership on the part of the master, and the absolute right of property in the person of the slave. I now ask your attention to the practical difference, and the immense distance—the *impassable gulf*—between the laws of God and justice and the slave laws, and to the effective principle which constitutes that difference; namely, the *commercial value of the persons of the slaves under the slave system* and the *absolute rejection of that principle* by all just and righteous governments. 1. Under the latter, with the exception of minors, the subordinates or governed are voluntary parties, and directly or indirectly exercise their self-control in creating the relations out of which arise the obligations of subordination and obedience which they assume. This fact has been fully evinced in regard to *citizens*, under the general and state governments, as subjects of governmental authority. The same fact will appear with equal clearness when considered in a more restricted sense; for the principle pervades every department of human society in practical life. Take the case of agents, clerks, apprentices, and employés of every description, and in their various relations they are relatively subordinates, "*controlled* by the will of

others, and are bound to submit and obey" according to the character of their engagements with their relative superiors or employers. But in all these cases the subordinates are voluntary parties in assuming the obligations of submission and obedience. Under the system of slavery the subordinates—the slaves—are not voluntary parties, and have no choice whatever in forming the relations which require their submission and obedience. They have no self-control in the matter, and are forced into this position of perpetual servitude in opposition to their will and of every just and natural feeling of humanity.

The difference of these cases is as wide as the poles; but what is the principle in the premises which constitutes this vast distinction? Precisely this: the latter system gives the master the right of property in the person—soul and body—of the slave, and recognizes him, "to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatever, as a chattel in the hands of the owner;" while the former system recognizes and protects its subordinates as men, in opposition to property of every description; and although it gives the proprietor—*not owner*—a limited right to the services of the subordinates according to the terms of their relations, it gives him no more right of property in their persons than it does to the throne of God. Hence,

the systems are immutably antagonistic—the one absolutely excluding the idea and principle of property in the persons of men; the other having no existence but in such right of property, and the power to use their persons as articles of merchandise in the market. 2. Under righteous governments, such as God approves, the governed have, as a general practical fact throughout the civilized world, the right and power—in all the business relations where service is required—to dissolve their relations, change their business, their obligations, and circumstances, to improve their condition. Under the system of slavery the subordinates have no such right or power. He is allowed indeed, in some instances, the wonderful boon of choosing whose property he shall be, by selecting the man who may bid him off in the market! But even this is a luxury rarely enjoyed by this species of property!! He is doomed, under this heartless system, to hopeless servitude, with no prospect of change, unless it should be the change of owners, till he finds the grave, “where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.” Again, the inquiry comes up, what makes this startling difference between the governed under these two systems of government? The answer is the same: one detests the principle of the right of property in the persons of men; the other has no other being

than in this unnatural right of property. 3. Just governments are founded upon the principle of *reciprocity*. The government in which this is not an effective principle is an unjust and detestable tyranny. This fact is full of interest, and of vital importance to human society, but I will only turn your attention now to a few examples for illustration. In all the relations of authority, subordination, submission, and obedience, referred to above and directly or indirectly ordained by the Almighty, the presence and operation of this principle of reciprocity is palpable. Agents, clerks, etc., while subordinates and serving under the "control of the will of others," according to the expressed or implied terms of their relations, are receiving compensation, by which, in time, they may become masters in business, controlling by their own will their business and subordinates. The apprentice, while submitting to control by the will of another, is forming business habits and acquiring a knowledge of the mysteries of his art, by which he may rise to the highest position of respectability and usefulness in society. And so with subordinates in general under righteous governments. Men in the highest circles of honorable and virtuous life have been subordinates, and subject to control by the will of others; and instances are not wanting of those who were subordinates, controlled by the



will of another, ascending from that position through the various distinctions of active life to the dignity and power of the President of this great republic. Your insinuation, that because subordinates are sometimes pressed by circumstances they can not control into very undesirable situations, and that because there are poor persons where slavery is excluded by law, therefore perpetual, involuntary slavery is a very fine thing, is wholly undeserving of any formal notice.

The system of slavery utterly repudiates the principle of *reciprocity*, and compels the slave, at the sacrifice of knowledge, honor, domestic relations, and the most sacred affections which God has planted in the human heart, to minister to the passions, appetites, and avarice of his owner. The one toils unpaid, in the very dregs of poverty and degradation, till the grave closes over him and he ceases to suffer, labor, and live, that the other may live at ease, grow rich, acquire honors, and luxuriate through life on the bitter earnings of his human property!! Why this painful difference between men of the same origin—*the INFIDEL speculations of some DOCTORS of DIVINITY to the contrary notwithstanding?*—I say the same origin, redeemed by the same blood, living on the same soil, breathing the same atmosphere, and warmed by the same sun—one class ascending from a



state of subordination and control by the will of another, to the highest dignities in refined and civilized society; and the other class, many of them with equal original intellect with their owners, descending in successive generations to the grave in poverty and ignorance, with no other distinction than the degradation inherent in slavery—in this as their shroud they depart from the presence of their oppressors into the silence of the tomb! Again, sir, before the face of this inquiry your philosophy is confounded and speechless. But the solution is plain and easy, and is found in the character of the governments under which they live. One abhors the doctrine of the right of property in the persons of its subjects; the other has no existence but in that odious doctrine, and to deprive it of that right would annihilate it in a moment. Though I may notice the subject hereafter, I will make a few passing remarks here on the case of children in their minority. You tell us, “Not to accord to them this *extreme* form of control,” . . . “absolute despotism,” . . . “would be a practical denial of their natural rights.” (Page 113.) Then you attempt somewhat adroitly to convert slaves into minors, and say, “Any other form of government”—than an absolute despotism—“would be, in their case, as well as in that of minors, a practical denial of their

rights." (Page 128.) All this effort to convert slaves into "minors" fails you, unless you can fully demonstrate that God has constituted minors marketable "chattels, to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatever, in the hands of their *owners*." This you can never do. If man, without divine authority, has so constituted them it is diabolical wickedness! In the judgment of sensible men such a plea for slavery will neither do service for the system, nor honor to its author. Although minor children are not parties exercising "self-control" in forming their relations to domestic government and authority, there is no point in the divine arrangements concerning man, where more ample provision is made to secure the interests of those concerned than in this case. God has planted in the hearts of parents, as an element of their nature, that principle of sympathy, kindness, affection, and interest for their offspring, and in the hearts of children that sense of dependence, confidence, and love toward parents which, unless perverted by such absurdities as your philosophy teaches, or by vice and negligence, will most effectually secure the greatest blessings to both parties—the governors and the governed. The relations, duties, responsibilities, confidence, love, and interests are *reciprocal*. This is God's first and unalterable principle in regard to government, order, and hap-

piness in human society; and mankind are indebted, under God, to *this effective principle of reciprocity* in domestic and other governments, for all the civilization and its accompanying blessings of every kind with which the world is now favored, or that it will ever enjoy. How intensely odious does the government of the slave system appear in the light of these facts!! That system, wholly discarding the principle of reciprocity, lays violent hands on the order God has ordained, rending domestic ties, and scattering whole families among the markets as articles of commerce! Under the former system its subjects are raised from minority to manhood, and, if virtuous, may be elevated to the highest positions of honor and usefulness. Under the latter, its victims, however virtuous, are degraded from manhood to minority, and from that to “chattels in the hands of their owners”—worked as beasts of burden down to the grave, and pushed into eternity from the midst of the darkness, ignorance, and horrors of perpetual, involuntary slavery! There must be a potent cause to produce such an effect. I repeat it, sir—and hope the American people will “repeat it till it passes into the currency of a proverb,” and that they will arise in their moral strength and apply the proper remedy—it is that government which gives *the right of property in the persons of human beings* that enslaves,

degrades, and brutalizes its subjects, the victims of its avarice; while those governments which exclude this principle, in which alone slavery has its existence, protect, elevate, and secure to their subjects the privileges and blessings of freemen. These unquestionable facts must forever confound your philosophy. One other point before I close this letter. All just governments have for their object the *greatest good* of the governed—their subjects. No government can be approved of God or be a blessing to man, which discards this object. This fact is prominent in the revealed will of God in regard to the government of man. In that government established in the first family of earth, afterward revived in the household of Abraham, then expanded over the Hebrew nation, and finally perfected under the Gospel for the government of his people, and adapted to all time and all people throughout the world—the all-controlling principle is *the greatest good of the governed*. The history of our race in the past demonstrates that wherever this principle has been observed and acted upon, the intended results—peace, prosperity, and virtue—have followed; and where it has been disregarded the judgments of Heaven have sooner or later chastened the outrage on the rights of man and the authority of God.

I have not forgotten, dear sir, that you rely with

confidence on Hebrew servitude in support of the system of slavery. As I shall notice your Scripture argument hereafter, I only remark here, 1. If I were to admit—which, however, I do not—that it was *slavery proper*; it would neither affect the facts I maintain nor serve your cause; for it was clearly an *exception* to the general principle of government established among that people. 2. As an *exception*, it belonged distinctly to that part of Hebrew institutions which have long since been abrogated by the authority of God; consequently, whatever may have been its character, it could not be perpetual, and is excluded irrevocably from the principles of the Divine government. God may tolerate governments which discard this principle in the same sense he does wickedness in other respects, but the whole history of nations is but the record of the wrath of Heaven in their overthrow and ruin in the end. We have right before our eyes the clearest demonstration of the perfect *contrast* between the *divine* principle—*government for the greatest good of the governed*—in the prosperity of the free citizens of this republic; and the *opposite*, not to say diabolical, principle—of *government for the greatest good of the governors or owners of the governed*—in the ignorance and degradation of the millions of slaves in the southern states.

The American governments—state and na-

tional—as it regards their free citizens, whatever else they contain, and however they may be prostituted to other purposes by weak or wicked men, most distinctly embody this great and righteous principle of government for the greatest good of the governed. Under this principle, within the brief space of a century, our advancement in every thing pertaining to domestic and social elevation and happiness, to civil and religious privileges, to the development of national resources of wealth and power, and the national character formed, and the high position taken among the nations of the earth, are without an example in the history of our race. The melancholy contrast which the degraded condition of the slaves presents in the face of this prosperity, forces again upon the mind the inquiry, What is the cause? The only answer which can be given, without uttering falsehood, is the one that has met you at every point in this investigation—the right of property in the person of human beings, based on the principle of government for the greatest good alone of the governors—THE OWNERS *of the subjects governed!* Over this system of “abomination which maketh desolate” hangs the frowns and curse of Heaven; on the other rests the smiles and promises of Providence.

In closing this letter, and dismissing your phi-



losophy, I ask your attention to some points which have been developed in this discussion thus far: 1. Your philosophy, which lies at the foundation of your whole system of slavery, the *analysis of slavery, government, and the constitution of human society*. 2. You define slavery to be "control by the will of another, with its correlatives—master and slave—with submission or subjection implied." 3. Government implies control and submission or subjection; consequently, all governments necessarily include the *principle of slavery* as an "essential element." 4. Government is composed of the "antagonistic" principles of freedom: self-control, and slavery—control by the will of another. 5. That to the same degree the subjects of government are controlled they are slaves; and that the degree of that control must be determined by the intelligence, moral and social condition of the governed. 6. That the intelligence, moral and social state of the Africans in this republic are such as to justify and require their absolute control in a state of perpetual servitude and bondage; and that in such a condition they may and ought to be used as property. On these principles of your philosophy you base the whole system of American slavery; and all the proofs, arguments, and conclusions are conformed to this philosophy, and derive their apparent strength from its assumed

soundness. And now, Doctor, you may recollect that, early in this correspondence, I respectfully suggested to you that if your philosophy is false, and fails you in these particulars, it must be fatal to your whole defense of this monstrous system.

I therefore beg your attention to the following points: 1. I have shown, from slave laws of the south, and from facts and arguments, with a clearness that can neither be evaded nor refuted, that your definition of slavery is totally false; and that "control and submission, or subjection," are mere accidents of the system; and that its only existence is in the owner's absolute right of property in *the person* of the slave, and his power under the laws of property to use him as a "chattel"—an article of merchandise in the market. 2. That your philosophy of government is equally erroneous; for, though it embodies the principle of control and submission, it absolutely discards the only principle that gives being to slavery—*the right of property in the person of the governed*. 3. That your assumption that citizens are *slaves* to the extent they are controlled by government, is an unwarrantable perversion of terms and language, an offense to self-respect and common-sense, and a contradiction of positive facts. 4. That your rule for enslaving and making merchandise of men, their mental and physical condition, is an

absurdity, and opposed to the whole order and government of God. 5. That just and righteous governments, approved of God, are designed for the greatest good of the governed; and the history of our race demonstrates the practical results of such governments to be the elevation of the condition and the perfecting of the humanity of the governed. 6. That the government of the slavery system is, in every vital point, directly and necessarily opposed to this principle of righteous government, and that the practical result of this government is the degradation, misery, and ruin, as far as this world is concerned, if not the future also, of the governed, as demonstrated by the condition of the slaves of the south. Therefore, being opposed to the order of God and the rights and highest interests of man, it is an ungodly system of oppression and cruelty!

Intending to address you again soon,

I remain yours, as ever,

J. H. P.

## LETTER V.

ERRONEOUS DEFINITION OF NATURAL  
RIGHTS EXPOSED.

Doctrine of natural rights—Men concede some rights, under legitimate governments, to secure protection in the use of others—Argument defective in changing the terms in the premises and the conclusion—Natural rights are the GOOD—The good is natural RIGHTS—The will of God not the rule of right only as it conforms to what is right in itself independent of the Divine will—The falsity and absurdity of these doctrines—The cause of slavery demands this denial of the sovereign will—“Extreme form of despotism the *natural right* of infants and slaves”—The whole position false.

REV. W. A. SMITH, D. D.: Dear Sir,—Having dismissed your philosophy for the present, I turn to what may not unaptly be called your metaphysics of the “constitution of the human mind,” and the “natural and inalienable rights of man.” As the doctrines of your fourth lecture, “THE QUESTION OF RIGHTS,” are in conformity with the principles of your philosophy, and as the utter fallacy and failure of that to sustain the system of slavery has been shown, and as the fabric must fall with its foundation, I might pass this part of your learned labors without particular notice. But as you have given the subject of “natural rights” a prom-

inent position in your Temple of Slavery, you might suppose, should I pass it without further attention, there is something in it so formidable as to deter us from examination.

1. To establish your theory of "natural rights" you deny "that legitimate government is a concession of some rights in order to secure others." (Page 130.) Again, "If, then, government be a concession of the *right* of self-control in this sense"—giving up any part of self-control—"it is the concession of an inalienable right, and should be abandoned as a piece of folly." (Page 80.) It is doubtful whether there is any man of intelligence who will not be surprised, that you should proclaim a doctrine that contradicts the observation and experience of the civilized world, unless his mental vision is wholly obscured by prejudice or interest. Its fallacy is exposed and refuted by your own practice. Why do you not pursue and administer *personally* the merited punishment upon the thief who steals your horse? Why do you not *with your own hands*, without "judge or jury," execute the wretch who maliciously murders your wife or child? Why, sir, do you not immediately, and with your own hands, avenge all your wrongs? God has ordained that the thief shall be punished, and that the willful murderer shall die. The only answer that truth can

give is, you have *conceded to government the natural right* which God has given you of self-control to avenge your wrongs in the absence of government, and your concessions to it. And you have *acquired the right*, which, without such concessions and relations to government, *you had not, and could not have*, to demand of government not only to avenge your wrongs, but to protect you in the enjoyment of all your *retained rights*, privileges, and acquirements. Now, your case is but a fair specimen of every man under "legitimate government." I feel indeed tempted further to expose the absurdity of this doctrine, but forbear lest I should seem to suspect the intelligence of the reader. I can not, however, dismiss it without an expression of sympathy for the reputation of those distinguished statesmen, jurists, and patriots of our early history; that, after all they have done to establish "legitimate government," and after all the distinguished blessings their labors have conferred on the nation, they should have had the misfortune not to foresee that Doctor Smith, of Virginia, in the middle of the nineteenth century, would discover and expose to the world their egregious ignorance! But so it is, and we must submit. Their reputation must go down to posterity under the posthumous odium of ignorance of a fact which formed an element in their own daily experience, and that of



every man under proper government; that just and legitimate government is *not* a concession of some rights, in order to secure the protection of government in the use and enjoyment of all other reserved rights.

2. You say, "Natural rights are, of course, such as are inherent in the constitution of man; inalienable, because in point of fact he can not be substantively deprived of them." (Page 77.) Now, if you include in this definition man's powers to will, act, acquire, possess, appropriate, and enjoy, it lays death at the very foundation of slavery; for that system deprives its victims of all these *rights* as it regards their own personal interests. But if you do not include these particulars, your definition is a mere evasion, intended to obscure the question and to make a false issue, such as may better suit the exigencies of the slavery system. That the system required you to obscure, instead of elucidate the question is suggested by the fact that you ask, "*What are rights?*" (Page 78.) Again you inquire, "*What are rights?*" (Page 80.) Then you change the number of your terms from the plural to the singular, "*the right,*" (page 82,) and then to "*the right itself.*" You again change your terms, and reach the luminous conclusion that "*the right, then, is the good.*" (Page 85.) And that there may be no mistake in this

important matter you give it another turn, and tell us, "THE ESSENTIAL GOOD, *that is, the right.*" (Page 94.) So that the conclusion of the whole matter of "natural inalienable rights" is, "the right is the good and the good is the right!" What a discovery! and will not a grateful posterity perpetuate the memory of its author by monumental honors as great, at least, as those of the system he defends?

With this presentation of the case, mainly in your own language, it requires but little attention to detect the fallacy in your process of reasoning. You start with "natural inalienable rights" in the premises, then shift your terms in number, name, and meaning, and bring the *moral quality of actions* alone into the conclusion! By such a process any thing can be proved or disproved, just to suit the time, but it requires such logic to defend slavery, and the system merits just such a defense! The case of "*Caius Toranius,*" and "*Horne Tooke,*" (pages 83, 86,) may illustrate the moral quality of actions, but have no more connection with the question of "natural rights" than your conclusion has with your premises; that is, none at all. Your explanation for this course of reasoning is as strange as your logic; namely, the ambiguity or indefiniteness of our language. You tell us, "Webster gives correctly some forty different meanings of this

term"—rights—"together with several subordinate senses in which it occurs, all of which are in common use." (Page 82.) Hence your reason, I suppose, for changing the term "natural rights" for the term "good," and "the good;" thereby to obtain a *definite or unambiguous term*. If this is not the case it will be as difficult for either you or your friends to defend your unauthorized use of terms, as it will be to defend the conclusion you reach by such a process. Now, Doctor, is it possible you overlooked the fact, or if you did not, how is it that you never hint to your readers that the same Webster gives correctly some *sixty different* meanings of the term *good*, together with between thirty and forty subordinate senses in which it occurs, all of which are in common use? So far then from changing an *indefinite* for a *definite* term, you have only shifted off an indefinite term for one still more so. Moreover, the term "good" may be used in a hundred cases—as a good house, a good farm, a good wagon—where "right" would be nonsense, "rights" ludicrous, and "natural rights" intensely absurd. You either overlooked or ignored these facts. If the former, I can not see how you will escape the charge of carelessness. If the latter, some may charge you with concealing the truth as the only means of defending slavery.

This is not all. Your defense of the “peculiar institution” has forced you into a “peculiar attitude” in regard to the *will of God as the rule of right*. Most of your speculations here are fallacious, if some of them do not approximate “profanity.” You say, “We can not agree with Tooke, Paley, Webster, and many others of great distinction, that RIGHTS and DUTIES which are reciprocal, are resolvable alone into the will of God—have his will alone for their ultimate foundation. I take ground back of this. True, I say with them—and I claim full credit in the declaration—that the volitions, the acts of God are always RIGHT; but I do not say that his will makes the essential or true distinction between *right* and *wrong*. We dare not assume that God could, by an act of volition, make the *right* to be the *wrong*, and the *wrong* to be the *right*—good evil, and evil good!” (Pages 90, 91.) “We take ground back of this. . . . It is true that both rectitude and duty, together with liberty, are resolvable into the essential good. . . . *Freedom, rectitude, and duty* are the modes of thought in which we conceive of the good as existing in the soul of man, and that they are, each of them, in their distinct nature and harmonious union, the true ideal of good.” . . . “And concerning the good in itself, which is thus in a humble degree perceived

by us, it is certainly a reality which is immutable and eternal. God did not make it, nor was it made. It is of the essential nature of God, and eternal. He is the great impersonation of the good. His will, his volitions, in all cases, are but the expressions of this high attribute." (Page 92.) "That the will of God did not make the right in itself, will readily appear. Is it to be conceived that there ever was a period in eternity past, when truth was not truth, or when truth did not exist? when the *good* was not the *good*, or when the good did not exist?" (Page 93.) . . . "Hence his will is a rule of right, because in all cases it *conforms* to the good, but it did not make the good. Therefore the *right*, as it conforms to the essential good, is of the nature of the good. It is properly a significate of the good, and not a significate of the *will of God*." (Page 94.) . . . "Hence, *freedom* is mine, *duty* is mine, and *rectitude* is mine, because the *good* is mine, and those are the elements of the good, each one implying the others. Hence arises the idea of *natural rights*; that is, the right with which I am endowed by the constitution of my nature as a rational being. But what is that *RIGHT*? Evidently the *good*. The good as an attribute is in my possession. I am constituted with it and by it. Hence it is inalienable. Divest me of the good as an



attribute of my nature, that is, liberty, rectitude, and duty, and I sink at once in the scale of being; I cease altogether to be a rational or accountable being." (Page 97.) In this, as in other cases, I have allowed you to speak for yourself; hence this lengthy quotation. Here, also, in your learned labors to settle a foundation on which to rest the system of slavery, you have not only failed, and involved the question of "natural rights" in obscurity, but also yourself, or your system, in contradictions and absurdities.

*First.* For, 1. You make "*freedom, rectitude, and duty*, each one implying the others, the elements of the ESSENTIAL GOOD, as existing in the soul of man." 2. This *good* is "immutable and eternal; God did not make it, nor was it made. It is of the essential nature of God, and eternal." 3. Then this *good*, the elements of which are "*freedom, rectitude, and duty*," and which your logic substitutes for "natural rights," is either peculiar to man, or peculiar to God, or common to both, or belongs to neither. If the *first*, then there "exists in the soul of man" an "uncreated, immutable, and eternal" principle, which you call the "essential good!!" This flatly contradicts common-sense and the word of God, which everywhere recognize man as a *created* being in all the elements of his nature. If the *second*, it implies,



to say the least, irreverence in applying to God the term rectitude, which implies, as to man, conformity to rules prescribed for moral conduct, but can never be so applied to him. But, further, it involves the absurdity of applying the term *duty* to God! Duty always implies obligation, with real or relative inferiority or subordination. To apply the term, in any sense authorized in holy Scripture, to God, is but little if any thing less than profanity. If the *third*, it *materializes* the Divine nature by constituting an element of character which belongs necessarily and alone to created beings—obligation to duty—a principle of “the essential nature of God;” and it *deifies* man by investing him with an “uncreated, immutable, and eternal” element of character which belongs alone to God! If the *fourth*—and this must be the fact, unless your theory is potent enough to sustain these contradictions and absurdities, if not profanities—your “essential good,” then, *in the character you have given it*, and in which your logic allows it to usurp the place of “natural rights and the sovereign will of God,” belongs neither to God nor to man, and has no existence only as an “abstraction” in a theory which is blindly laboring to prove that an unholy, earth-born system of human oppression and slavery is of heavenly and divine origin!

*Secondly.* The terms "good" and "rights," with all they are descriptive of, are both *relative*, and have no abstract, separate, or independent existence. They can exist only in relation to some body, or some being, as an appendage, attribute, or quality. And to talk of either as independent of that *absolute relation* is an offense alike to common intelligence and the teachings of the Bible. Yet you affirm that the "GOOD," which in your logic is but another term for "natural inalienable rights," "rights," and "the right," is "uncreated, immutable, and eternal, and of the essential nature of God;" but his "nature" is *absolute, independent, and not relative*. Therefore, you must confine the "good"—natural rights—alone to God, or you must invest man with the uncreated and essential nature of Jehovah. And strange as it may appear you have "entailed" yourself in that very absurdity. Hence you say, "The good as an attribute is in my possession. I am constituted with it and by it. Hence it is inalienable." That is, man is "endowed by the constitution of his nature as a rational being" with an "uncreated, immutable, and eternal" principle which is of "*the essential nature of God!!*" Doubtless nothing but a blind devotion to an indefensible cause could have betrayed you into such an unenviable attitude.

*Thirdly.* But, sir, though I might be inclined to tolerate your logic if it merely deified man, it becomes detestable when it attempts to rob God. You distinctly deny that "*rights and duties, which are reciprocal, are resolvable into and have the will of God alone for their ultimate foundation.*" 1. If your doctrine be correct, then it is certain the Savior committed an egregious error when he taught his disciples, and through them the world of mankind, to pray, "THY WILL be done on earth, as it is done in heaven." The man, according to this infallible teaching, who does *the will of our Father who is in heaven, performs every duty, personal and relative, which belongs to his position in life, whatever that position may be, reaches the highest point of human perfection attainable in this world, and approximates the perfection of the inhabitants of heaven, as near as it is possible for man to do while on earth. He has, and can have, no other rule of duty than the Divine will, for that will reaches every duty required of man.* 2. With this denial, as rights and duties involve the highest interests of man, it was reasonable to expect that you would give us a plain and intelligible rule governing those interests, in the place of the will of God, rejected by you; but you appear to have lost the question in the end, in the midst of your metaphysics and moral philosophy. 3. Rights

and duties necessarily imply a law or rule investing one with authority to require duties, and obliging another to their performance. And such rule, if righteous, must limit the claims on the one hand and the obligations on the other within the bounds of right and justice. In the absence of all such rules no one has a right to claim duties, nor are any bound to render service; "for, where there is no law there is no transgression." 4. Every moral rule for the government of intelligent beings, regulating their reciprocal rights and duties, can only exist as an *effect*, produced by an intelligent, competent cause having authority to prescribe such rule. Any man must be reckless of his reputation or his cause must be desperate, who will assert that a rule of that character can exist without having its "ultimate foundation" in the *will* of some intelligent being. And to say that such a rule, by whatever term designated, for the government of the reciprocal rights and duties of man, is self-existent or "uncreated and eternal," in any other sense than as the *effect* of the *will of God*, is either to exclude him from the moral government of the world, or to compel him to govern by a rule or law independent of his own will! The one would approximate atheism, the other blasphemy! But, not to pursue this question further

in that direction, I ask your attention to it in another view.

If there is any thing intelligible to be gathered from your learned labors on this subject, it is, 1. That you have absorbed "natural inalienable rights," "rights," "the right," and the "rule of right," into what you are pleased to call the "ESSENTIAL GOOD." 2. You have compounded this essential good of "*freedom, rectitude, and duties.*" 3. This good, constituted of these "elements," has *not* the "*will of God* as its ultimate foundation," but is "uncreated, immutable, and eternal." Now, dear sir, as I have notified you in another place, the elements of which this uncreated good is composed have *necessarily* only a *relative existence*. Freedom can have no possible existence only in *relation* to a being which is free; rectitude can not exist but in *relation* to beings possessing that virtue; duties are impossible only in *relation* to those capable of performing such works. Freedom where no one is free, rectitude where no one possesses that virtue, duties where there is no one to perform them, is a contradiction, an absurdity, a positive impossibility! Then, sir, "I take ground back of this"—the "elements" of your "essential good"—and inquire for the *origin* of those to whom freedom, rectitude, and duties are *relative*,

and without which relation they can not possibly exist. Whatever may be the facts with regard to other beings, these "elements" or characteristics belong appropriately to man, and, so far as his case is concerned, or they apply to him, can have no other existence except in relation to man. Now, if *the will of God is the ultimate foundation* of the being of man, and these elements combined have no existence only in their relation to him as qualities or circumstances of his character, they are as absolutely dependent on the Divine will for their existence as man is for his being. But man exists alone by *the will of God*. The will of God ordained his constitution and the relations out of which reciprocal rights and duties arise, and without such acts and will of God man never could have had a being. Therefore, these elements—your "essential good," and which your speculations make independent of the Divine will, "uncreated, immutable, and eternal"—are as positively dependent on the will of God for their existence as man is for his; but man is absolutely dependent; consequently, your "uncreated *good* existing in the soul of man," is a preposterous fiction, having no foundation in the experience of man, common-sense, or the word of God, and merits the severest reprehension for assailing the sovereignty of the Divine will.



From these conclusions your theory of "essential good," which you have substituted for the will of God and natural rights, can escape only by either maintaining that freedom can exist where no one is free, rectitude where no one possesses that virtue, and that duties can be performed without any one to perform them, or by denying that man — with his constitution, powers, relations, rights, obligations, and capacities of possessing and enjoying—exists by the express order and will of God. The former would be extreme folly; the latter a total renunciation of the teachings of the holy Scriptures, and the being and character of God!

*Fourth.* The apparent difficulties you attempt to throw in the way of the supremacy of the Divine will, are so much more showy than profound that, while they may serve very well as a rhetorical embellishment, they do injustice to your reputation as a logician and divine. You gravely inquire, "Is it to be conceived that there ever was a period in eternity past, when truth was not truth, or when truth did not exist? when the good was not the good, or when the good did not exist?" (Page 93.) 1. Your question, in regard to the "good," assumes that to answer in the affirmative would be false and absurd. I have only to remind you that all your conclusions are sought with

reference to man, and that his case is the main subject of this discussion, and then define "*the good*," in your own terms, to turn the whole force of your interrogatory against yourself. For example, "Is it to be conceived that there ever was a period—previous to the creation of man—in eternity past, when freedom, rectitude, and duty—as they can have no being only as they relate to man—did exist?" To answer in the affirmative would be false, because it would contradict the experience of every man; and absurd, for it would involve an utter impossibility. 2. As to your question concerning the eternity of truth. Truth has no *abstract existence*, and exists only in relation to beings, subjects, things, or objects, and is eternal precisely as the *facts* of which it *affirms* are eternal. What is *really* eternal is immutable; but truth changes just as the facts to which it relates, or of which it affirms, change; hence, what is truth, or true to-day, may be false to-morrow. It was truth five years ago, more or less, that you *had not* written a book in defense of slavery; but now to affirm it would be false, because the facts have changed. The same process will prove the *eternity* of error and falsehood with equal clearness. "Is it to be conceived that there ever was a period in eternity past, when the *opposite* of truth—*error* or *falsehood*—was not error or false-

hood; or when the *opposite* of truth—error or falsehood—did not exist?” 3. You very seriously assert, “We dare not assume that God could, by an act of volition, make the *right* to be the *wrong*, and the *wrong* to be the *right*—good evil, and evil good!” This grave cautionary sentence, and the doctrines it implies, derive their apparent plausibility from a secret changing of the true issue. The question is *not* whether God, consistently with his character, the constitution of man, and the order of things, established *by his will* for the government of mankind, could, “by an act of volition,” *now* reverse that order so as to make the right to be the wrong, and the good evil; but, whether he could not, in the premises, in creating man and in establishing his relations and the order of government, have so constituted them as to make what is *now* right to have been the wrong, and the good evil. The Bible clearly teaches that God, “by an act of volition,” or his sovereign will, created *two* distinct orders of intelligent beings—angels and men.

It is also equally clear that he has so differently constituted them and established such a different order of relations and government for them, that for either to take, or attempt to take, the place of the other would be to convert the right into the wrong and the good into the evil. For example,

should men undertake the work of angels, when ministers of Divine justice, as in the destruction of the first-born of Egypt and the Assyrian army; or should angels engage in the works of men, such as agriculture, or—which you say is the right and the good—go into the market and buy men, women, and children, and hold them as “chattels”—in either case, what is right and good for one class under the order established by the will of God, would become wrong and evil under the order established by the same will for the other class. But God could have, “by an act of volition,” created *all* angels, to the exclusion of man; or he could have created them *all* men, to the exclusion of angels. To deny this would be to reject the character and being of God as revealed in the Bible. Hence, had he made all angels, what is right and good for man now would be wrong and evil to them as angels; or, if he had made them all men, what is right and good for angels now would be wrong and evil for them as men. Moreover, God, by an act of volition, has made the *same thing* right and good at one time and wrong and evil at another time. Formerly, by the express will of God, it was the right and good for the Jewish high-priest and his people to worship God through the medium of the sprinkled blood of animals upon the altar and the mercy-seat—to

neglect this was sin. But by the same Divine will that order of things is abolished, and it is now wrong and evil—being a rejection of Christ—to worship him in that way. Therefore, “by an act of volition,” God has done the very thing you pronounce to be impossible! This is another instance of the impotency of your theory, and a notice to inquirers after truth that your conclusions must be received with caution. You evidently felt that nothing could be gained for the system of slavery by a fair exposition of the question of “acquired rights,” as slaves can acquire nothing but what, by the laws of the system, absolutely belongs to their owners. What you have said, therefore, on that point, whether true or false, is of no consequence on this part of the subject. But why all this expenditure of learning, labor, and logic, “entailing” yourself and system in those inconsistencies, fallacies, and absurdities? Simply to fix premises from which to reach the marvelous conclusion that minor children, and “those in a similar condition”—slaves—have a “natural inalienable right” to be placed under an *absolute despotism*! “Therefore,” you say, “*this extreme form of despotism* is the natural right of infants.” (Page 113.) Hence, “for the same general reasons, it is the duty of the state to place an uncivilized race—slaves of the south—which may chance to dwell within its

borders under a similar form of government." Therefore, slaves must be placed under a similar extreme form of despotism, with the difference that they are, according to the slave laws, "to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatsoever, chattels in the hands of their owners!" Therefore slavery is right, and the slave has a "natural inalienable right" to be reduced to perpetual, involuntary bondage, placed under the laws of property, and to be used in the house, shop, field, and market, as human "chattels in the hands of the owners!!" This is natural rights with a vengeance. What a caricature of facts, and an insult to common-sense! And yet, if this is not the conclusion at which you arrive your labor is wholly lost, and your book is worse than a blank. Still, Doctor, it may all be very plain to you and your admirers, but I am sure that to all impartial and intelligent men, another thing is much more plain; namely, that it is the "natural inalienable *right*" of every man to call such logic exquisite nonsense.

Hopeless as is the system of slavery here, at least as far as your logic is concerned, I can not dismiss this point without correcting a great blunder, and thereby removing another prop. To furnish a case analogous to the despotism of the slave system, you place minors under an "extreme despotism" of absolute control. *Despotism* is de-



fined, "Absolute power; authority unlimited and uncontrolled by man, constitution, or laws, and depending alone on the will of the prince"—in this case, the will of parents. Now, sir, in this entire matter there is not the least element of despotism to be found. God has constituted parents the natural guardians of their minor children; but, instead of the cold, iron heart and will of despots, he has given them, as an element of their nature, the warm, earnest, sympathetic, interested, affectionate hearts which, in instances without number, lead them to sacrifice ease, comfort, health, and life itself for the protection and well-being of their children; and, instead of investing them with the power of despots, he has given them authoritatively the constitution and laws by which they are to govern in his fear, and for his glory, and the highest possible good of their household. And when parents faithfully discharge their duties according to their Divine requirements, so far is despotism or a particle of the degrading principle of slavery from being found there, that the love of God and virtue is there, and every element of the humanity of the children is developed and perfected in the highest degree. The case of children under the government of parents—the natural guardianship which God has appointed—analagous to the odious, unauthorized despotism

of involuntary perpetual slavery!! To assert or assume it is but little less than an insult to Heaven, and a slander upon the order and arrangements of God. Slavery, as I have shown in another place, treats these high and holy relations, sympathies, and interests with contempt, and tramples them in the dust. For the system, with sacrilegious hands on the order God has ordained for the good of mankind, to attempt to derive support from such a source, is but another demonstration of its inherent depravity, and only aggravates its odiousness by laboring to degrade the pure and dignified institutions of Divine appointment to a level with itself.

Having brought to view the principal fallacies of your theory of "natural inalienable rights," I close this letter, and reserve for my next some facts and inferences by which the subject may be seen in its true character.

In the mean time I remain yours, as ever,

J. H. P.

## LETTER VI.

THE TRUE CHARACTER OF NATURAL RIGHTS  
OPPOSED TO SLAVERY.

The intellectual and moral constitution of man opposed to the idea of property—God has not recognized him as property, nor authorized others to do so—The true relation and claims of justice and benevolence—The development, maturity, and use of man's natural powers, intellectual, moral, and physical, utterly incompatible with the claims and operations of slavery.

REV. DR. SMITH,—As to facts bearing on this question: 1. God has given man, in his creation, certain physical, moral, and intellectual powers, which belong to his constitution and being, and without which he might be something else, but would not be man. This constitution and nature are common to the race, regardless of color or condition in life. 2. This constitution includes the capacity to reason, will, act, accumulate, possess, appropriate, and enjoy; and, by the express will of God, he was created perfectly free, as it regarded any being, except his Maker, having a right to restrict him in the exercise and use of those powers and characteristics of his nature. 3. God gave man that capacity and abilities with the design that he should employ and use them for his benefit,

and that he should possess and enjoy the results. To suppose the contrary of the first and second positions would contradict facts and universal experience. To assume the contrary of the third would impeach the wisdom, goodness, and justice of God. 4. Therefore, man possessed, according to the order and will of his Maker in the premises, in his original constitution, the *natural right* to life, liberty, the powers of reasoning, of will, of action, of acquiring, possessing, and of appropriating and enjoying the results of his labors. With this matter-of-fact view of man's character and rights when considered apart from government, I have only to inquire what restrictions God put upon them *directly* in placing him under government, or *indirectly* by establishing permanent *relations* essential to human society—the state for which man was originally designed and created. If those natural rights are abridged, without involving injustice and oppression, it must be by the authority of God, either exercised by himself or delegated to others for that special purpose.

It is not necessary here to pursue this inquiry further than clearly to ascertain whether, in either of these ways, man's natural rights have been so restricted as directly, or by clear and legitimate consequences, to involve the principle or element of slavery. And I here keep distinctly before

your mind the essential characteristic of slavery—the life and being of the system—the right of property in the persons of the slaves as “chattels in the hands of their owners.” It will not be denied by any who are acquainted with the subject, or any whose judgment deserves respect, that just and legitimate government originated with God, and that all such governments derive their authority from their conformity to the Divine will. And, I. The first government instituted by the supreme Ruler in which man was, and is, immediately concerned was *domestic*. It is *specific, authoritative, and perpetual*, during man’s probation on earth. It is based upon, and precisely adapted to, those relations which divine Wisdom ordained for the perpetuation of the race of man in this state of being. It is so recognized throughout the holy Scriptures; by the Savior, his apostles, and the Christian world to the present day; and must be so recognized to the end of time. And the only question here is, did God in establishing this form of government so restrict man’s *original natural rights* as to render the governed, or any portion of them, *slaves*—“chattels in the hands of their owners;” or by any legitimate consequences to include the element of slavery? The bare inquiry in the light of revelation is the unanswerable refutation of the affirmative. It has been shown in

another place, with a clearness that can not be evaded, that instead of the domestic government ordained by infinite Wisdom being an "extreme despotism," including the corroding and odious principle of slavery, it is a government of justice, perfectly reciprocal in sympathies, affections, obligations, interests, and honors; and that, when faithfully administered, it tends at once to the development and perfection of the entire humanity of our nature, and to elevate the governed to the highest standard of usefulness, happiness, and honor here, and to heaven and glory hereafter. So far then is the principle of slavery from being found here, that it is not allowed even to touch, with its polluted finger, the least particle of the government or relations which God has ordained in this department of his economy in regard to man! 2. The same is strictly true of man as a subject of government, in his social and political relations. Indeed, to suppose that God, in establishing the primary relations and government of man, should utterly exclude the principle of slavery, and then should ordain other relations and institutions which directly conflict with, and absolutely destroy, the original plan by embodying the element of slavery, is more than an impeachment of—it is a direct indignity offered to—the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God! That he has not



done so is sufficiently clear from the fact that, in all the learned labors and persevering struggles of pro-slavery philosophers and divines to sustain the system of slavery, no one of them has been able to cite the passage, or refer to the place in divine revelation where God has so abridged the *natural rights* of man, as above stated, as to reduce one portion of mankind to the condition of *property*, in the hands of the other as their owners. If Heaven had ever issued such an edict, or established such an order among men, you, sir, in your zeal for slavery, would long since have settled the controversy and superseded your "philosophy," and all other authorities, by giving us the *express* declaration of God on the subject. This you have not done, and never will do, nor will any other ever achieve such a triumph for slavery, for the plain reason that God has never reduced his "own image," or man who was made in that image, to the relation and condition of property. Wherever this is done it is the work of wicked men at war with the will of Heaven. 3. I will only inquire here, whether the divine Being has clearly authorized one part of the human family so to abridge—or rather to annihilate—the natural rights of the other as to own, use, and in all respects treat their persons, soul, body, and spirit, as merchandise for the market. And I might

here also respectfully challenge you, and the whole pro-slavery school of divines, infidels, and philosophers to show where God has directly or, by any acknowledged canons of interpretation, indirectly delegated any such authority to men. Just produce that authority and it will at once establish the system of slavery—even American slavery—and forever “put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.”

I will not, however, press you for your authority, as it would be to demand an absolute impossibility. That man was made for society, and that society requires government, and that government implies relative authority and subordination I readily admit. But it has already been clearly shown that the constitution of man—his very humanity, the special gift of God—is the necessary opposite of slavery; that the genius of just government abhors the principle, and that the *relative* authority and subordination created by legitimate government, so far from containing the element, or sustaining the system of slavery, is a standing practical refutation of both, as demonstrated in all the free states in this republic, and also in the south in regard to the free white citizens in the slave states.

Till the advocates of slavery adduce their authority from God to reverse the order of his gov-

ernment and enslave their fellow-men, I might here rest the case; but I examine it a little further.

While the Author of our being has not made slaves of men himself, by subjecting them to the laws and uses of property, nor ordained relations or institutions, domestic, social, or political, which reduce men to that state, nor authorized men to degrade their fellow-men to the condition of chattels in the hands of their owners, he has distinctly proclaimed principles of Divine authority and universal application which stand as an eternal testimony against the whole system of human slavery. "Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbor, neither rob him." This is the authoritative, universal, perpetual mandate of Heaven; but slavery practically sets it at defiance, and, with a thousand aggravations, both defrauds, and robs millions of mankind without remorse. And, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; I am the LORD," forever excludes the idea, and renders even the thought preposterous in the extreme, that God has invested one class of men with authority to reduce another class to the condition of property, and to supply the markets with their persons as articles of merchandise.

It is questionable whether any other system of oppression on earth would have the effrontery

to affirm this, except the system of slavery. Again: "Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." 1. This is an unchangeable article in the Divine constitution of God's moral kingdom among men. 2. It is the sum of the Divine will in regard to the *relative* duties of men to each other, presented with a perspicuity and comprehensiveness which nothing less than the wisdom of God could arrange. 3. It comprises all the duties we owe to our fellow-men, and is of universal application, obligation, and authority. There is not only no authority here for converting men, women, and children into property, but, in the light of this unequivocal declaration of the Divine will in the premises, before a man can hold his fellow as a slave in the character of a chattel, without a palpable violation of this Divine precept, he must be willing to abandon the relations, comforts, honors, and order of domestic life; all social and political privileges; relinquish self-respect, and consign himself, and his children after him, to ignorance, poverty, degradation, and toil, for life; and to be kicked, cursed, handcuffed and driven to market with other stock, and auctioned off as an article of trade, and when dead to be thrown into the ground with but little more ceremony than attends "the burial of an ass." And

could any one be found to make this choice, so far from being suitable even for a slave, he would be a fool, and fit only for a place in the mad-house! Clear as this case is, however, I will not close this letter without noticing the summary manner in which you have attempted to dispose of this Divine rule so formidable to the system of oppression you are so zealous to defend.

You say "there are only two senses" in which this precept can be understood. 1. "Do unto another whatsoever you would have him do unto you, if you were in his situation;" or, 2. "Do unto another whatsoever you would have a *right* to require another to do unto you, if you were in his circumstances." (Pages 136, 137.) You admit if the law is to be understood in the first sense, slavery ought to be abolished; "for we should, no doubt, desire to be released, if we were in a state of domestic slavery." You dismiss the first "sense" of this rule as deserving but little notice, on the ground of the assumed absurdities that follow such an interpretation, or application. In the front of those absurdities, and the only one that has any plausibility—for the case of *criminals* is not the question—is that of children. You say "such an interpretation would not only abolish slavery," but "it would reach to the domestic slavery of children also." *The domestic slavery of*

*children!* Children "chattels in the hands of their owners" by the authority of God! Handcuffed and sent to market as articles of property or produce!! What an insult to truth and common-sense, and what a slander upon the institutions of Jehovah!!! As I have heretofore demonstrated the utter fallacy and presumption of your theory in attempting to degrade minor children to the condition of slaves, the absurdities for which you have so summarily dismissed this application of the rule have no existence but in your perversion of terms, and your inveterate attachment to the system of *slavery*. Your treatment of the second "sense" of this Divine rule, though less offensive in form, is no less defective in fact, and is equally impotent both as to sustaining your system, or evading the force and authority of this universal law. You make the rule say, "do unto another whatsoever you would have a *right* to require of him," etc. But then there must be a righteous rule, or law, by which to determine what one man has a *right to require* of another. What is that law, and where is it to be found, which is to decide what I have a right to require of others in a change of circumstances? Dear Doctor, your system of unconditional, involuntary, perpetual slavery stood before this holy precept as a guilty culprit before a righteous judge, and dared not tarry to make



those inquiries, but hurried away as a fugitive from justice with indecent haste! It must, however, be brought back, though it should even require the potency of the "Fugitive-Slave law," and stand its trial.

The rule or law which is to determine what I have a "right to require" of others must be either, 1. *Benevolence*, including mercy, grace, and humanity, to the exclusion of *justice*; or, 2. *Mere justice*, to the exclusion of benevolence; or, 3. *Justice in harmony with benevolence*, grace, mercy, and humanity. This statement covers the whole ground, and one of those positions must constitute the rule by which we are to "do unto others as we would have them do unto us, and to love our neighbor as ourself." It can not be the first. This is impossible; for benevolence or any other principle that would *exclude* the presence and *claims of justice* in actions, would cease to be benevolence, and would become *injustice*. Your almost heartless exposition of this truly Divine precept substantially takes the second position; namely, justice, to the exclusion of benevolence; for no one has a *right to require* any thing of me only as such requirement is founded in *strict justice*. That there may be no mistake as to your application of this precept, you either *did* or did *not* mean to exclude benevolence from that justice on which

the "right to require" action is based. If the latter, then you have misstated the case, and have admitted a principle in the precept which will utterly destroy your whole system, and liberate every slave on the earth—*benevolence*, including grace, mercy, humanity, and love operating in harmony with *justice*. If the former, you take issue with Divine revelation, the genius of the Gospel of Christ, and the pure spirit of Christianity. It would be treating your intelligence and good sense with disrespect to attempt formally to prove to you that the redemption of the world, the whole Christian system, the triumphs of grace, the salvation of the unnumbered millions of our race in heaven—all have their foundation in the *benevolence* of God in *harmony* with his *justice*. Indeed, any attempt to separate and exclude benevolence from this constitution of God's moral government among men is at war with Divine authority; and your system is clearly chargeable with this sin. However, leaving you to dispose of those difficulties as best you can, I will try the claims of slavery on your own ground of strict justice, and the result must be fatal to the whole system of unrighteous despotism. The slave "requires" his liberty, and before you can deny him this "*right*" you must demonstrate your *right*, founded in strict justice ordained of God, to hold

him as a "chattel in your hands as his owner." But it has been shown with a clearness and strength that defies the assaults of pro-slavery logic, that no such *right* was ever invested in man by the Divine will or authority. The Author of man's being has given him a constitution and powers which are inherently and necessarily the opposite of slavery, and that can never be prostituted to that vile system but in violation of justice. He has excluded slavery from every relation, and from every form of government which he has ordained among men; and has authorized no man or set of men on earth to reduce men to the condition, and to put them in the relation to, and under the laws of property; consequently, every such act is a usurpation of Divine right, and an outrage upon the principles of justice as revealed to man in the word of God. Hence, every slave on earth has a *right*, founded in eternal justice, to require his liberty; therefore, placing the application of "doing to others as we would have the *right to require* them to do unto us," on the ground of stern justice, would liberate every slave under heaven. But when we give it the true application of benevolence, operating to the full extent of its powers, in harmony with justice, it will do far more than merely abolish slavery. I need not tell you, sir, that benevolence—the be-

nevolence of Christianity—can and does perform a thousand things which justice can not demand, but does not forbid. If I owe you but one dollar justice requires me to pay, and will never be satisfied without I do pay; but justice can not demand of me *to give* you a thousand dollars, however pressingly your necessities may require that sum to relieve your sufferings. Benevolence, however, may furnish you that amount, and if no one is defrauded by it, justice will not only approve the work, but will protect me in *giving* and you in *receiving* and enjoying the fruits of my benevolence. This is the true character of that holy precept. The great heart of our fallen race throbs with insuppressible desires for the exercise of benevolence wherever necessities and sufferings are found; and God designed, and has given man the example, that the crowning glory of this divine rule should be the holy work of benevolence on the broadest scale consistent with the right of justice. Any view of this rule more limited is a caricature of truth, and an indignity offered to its Author. Apply this Scriptural and only correct view of this subject to the system of slavery, and *justice* would not only disinthral the enslaved and degraded millions of mankind, but would rejoice in, harmonize with, and protect *benevolence* in her Godlike work of pouring light upon their dark

minds, binding up their bleeding hearts, relieving their necessities, and elevating them physically, morally, and intellectually till they should be raised up to the privileges and enjoyments of civilization, Christianity, and freedom.

With the errors of your explanation of this rule corrected, I have only to call up the leading points which have been established in this letter to see, with sufficient clearness, as far as the purposes of this discussion are concerned, the subject of man's natural rights in its true character, and the incurable fallacies of your theory. 1. God originally endowed man, as essential to his being and character, with a capacity to reason, will, act, acquire, and enjoy. 2. That he designed those powers for active use, and that man should enjoy the results of their right application. 3. That man was free from every vestige of slavery in his person, his powers, his constitution, his relations, and his privileges. 4. That from all the relations and governments God has ordained among men slavery—*the right of property in the person, soul, body, and spirit, of human beings*—is absolutely and forever excluded. 5. While God himself has made man free, he has no where, in the whole range of revelation, authorized, directly or indirectly, men to enslave their fellow-men by putting them under the laws of property as merchandise, and reducing

them to the condition of "*chattels in the hands of their owners.*" 6. That God has authoritatively prescribed such rules and laws for the government of human conduct in all relations in life, of justice, benevolence, mercy, humanity, and love, as must necessarily, if obeyed, eternally exclude slavery from among mankind; therefore, 7. Man, by the authority of his Maker and Judge, has the *natural inalienable right* to life, liberty, and the use of all the natural powers God has given him in the pursuit of happiness, within the limits of the moral constitution under which divine Wisdom has placed him; namely, to love God supremely and his neighbor as himself, and to do unto others—according to the principles of justice in harmony with benevolence, mercy, and humanity—as he would desire them to do unto him. So far, then, is slavery from "coinciding" with man's natural rights, that they are in eternal hostility the one to the other. Infinite Wisdom and Goodness made man free, and he feels to the center of his heart wronged, robbed, and degraded when enslaved. But the record of God still lives in his bosom, and he only awaits the opportunity to arise and assert the rights with which Heaven has invested him, but of which the cowardice, cupidity, and crime of men have robbed him for a time. I will only detain you to notice one item more in this communication.



You have reiterated till it will surely be remembered that man has "*no right to do wrong.*" Allowing the truth of this assertion, its proper application would ruin your whole system and totally abolish slavery. Men have "no right to do wrong;" but to hold and treat men, women, and children as property, is absolutely wrong, because contrary to the order and will of God; therefore, men have no right to hold slaves. But this is not the conclusion at which you were aiming; and I notice it as another instance of the blindness of your logic. However, if taken without its necessary restrictions and qualifications, it is not true that men have no right to do wrong. To determine the right or wrong of actions there must be some principle, rule, or law by which such actions can be tried. Laws are either human or divine. Divine laws are all and always right. Human laws are frequently wrong and contrary to the Divine. Moreover, human laws frequently attempt to regulate *moral questions* on which God has never authorized human legislation.

Now, it depends on which of those systems of laws is made the rule of action whether men have a right to do wrong or not. As far as human laws have authority from God to interfere, men have a right to disbelieve the Christian system; but such unbelief is wrong and wicked according

to the Divine law. In this case, therefore, men have a right to do wrong. Furthermore, according to the Divine law every man has a right to believe and practice Protestant Christianity; but according to some human laws this is wrong, and will subject the offender to punishment or death.

Hence, in all such cases, with many others which might be named, men have not only a right to do wrong, but it is their solemn duty to do so; for, though it is wrong according to human codes, it is right and duty according to Divine authority. "Judge ye whether it is better to obey God than men."

These facts apply in all their force to the system of slave laws. The Divine laws make every man free; the slave system reduces millions of the human race to hopeless bondage and degradation. Hence, what is right according to the slavery laws is wrong in the sight of the Divine code, and what the Divine law requires is wrong in the sight of the slave laws.

Having exposed the absurdity of your theory that men have a *natural right to be enslaved*, and that it robs God of his sovereignty; and having also presented the subject of man's natural rights and God's sovereign will in their true character, as founded in the constitution and relations of man, and revealed in the Bible, I release you for the present,

intending soon, however, to call your attention to other points involved in this discussion.

Still remaining yours, etc.,

J. H. P.

## LETTER VII.

FALSE DOCTRINE OF NATURAL RIGHTS  
APPLIED TO GOVERNMENT.

“The doctrines of natural rights applied to government”—The depravity of man is merely *deprivation*—Man’s “lower physical nature” at war with his “pure intelligence”—According to this doctrine the work of conversion must be performed on the body, and not the soul—Slaves must be placed under an extreme despotism, to prevent the destruction of their liberty, by the law of habit—The remedy worse than the evil—The assumed analogy between the condition of infants and that of slaves false and absurd—The system of slavery makes “savages” of slaves, and then, because they are such, claims the right to enslave them.

REV. DR. W. A. SMITH,—Your fifth lecture purports to be “THE DOCTRINES OF RIGHTS APPLIED TO GOVERNMENT.” As I have evinced that *your* doctrines of rights are wholly erroneous, however well you may succeed in applying them to slave government—for this is the ultimate end you have in view—the result will be as fruitless as your doctrines are defective. I should be pleased to proceed at once to the examination of your Scripture arguments, as those, with your philosophy and doctrines of natural rights, are mainly relied on to support the system of slavery; but as you have thrown in a great amount of matter between

those topics I will follow in your own order, though at the sacrifice of connection and method. Your ardent zeal for the perpetual enslavement of millions of mankind has not only vitiated your philosophy, and blinded your logic, but has also corrupted your theology. I hope, however, your morals will escape in this scene of confusion.

In regard to the fall of man you say, "The *depravity* of man's nature was the result of *deprivation*, and not the infusion of an evil principle as an attribute of his nature." (Page 104.) And, after stating that, previous to the fall, "his lower physical nature operated in perfect and harmonious subordination to his higher spiritual nature," you add that, in the fall, "there resulted a deprivation of the divine Spirit, such as entirely changed the relation of those departments of his nature. Under the clouded condition of intellect, consequent upon this deprivation, his lower nature, with its appetites, propensities, and passions, is brought into constant and fierce conflict with his spiritual nature." (Page 105.) Who that has any knowledge of the subject would ever suppose this to be a statement of the Scripture doctrine, of the deep hereditary depravity of the moral, spiritual, and intellectual nature of man, by a Protestant doctor of divinity? You make man's depravity to consist entirely in *deprivation*, and to affect his spir-

itual and moral nature, mainly through the agency of "his lower physical nature;" consequently, his *lower physical nature is the main seat of human depravity!* while every one who is not an idiot knows that the physical nature of man—the body—is the mere agent of the mind, and always under its control where moral responsibility is concerned; and moreover that the Bible everywhere recognizes the soul—the mind—and not the body as the seat of human depravity and moral corruption. "For out of the heart, including the whole spiritual and moral nature of man, proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." Physical disease—severe sickness—is the *deprivation* of health; and although it is "not the infusion of an evil principle as an *attribute*" of the body, it is the presence and operation of a principle or influence which affects the whole physical nature, and is the opposite of health; so also *depravity* is not only *deprivation*, but the presence and operation of an evil principle or influence that affects the whole moral and intellectual nature, and is the direct opposite of moral holiness.

In like manner you talk of and reiterate the terms, "the *pure* intelligence, the precipient of good," etc., (page 112;) by which you mean the *pure* mind, or you utter what is unintelligible.



If by "*pure intelligence*," or mind, you mean that it is *unmixed* with matter—material substances—it is nonsense; if you mean that it is *morally pure*, without the sanctifying agency of the Holy Spirit, it is *untrue*, or the Bible is false! Your conclusion in this case is fully worthy your premises. Hence, entirely forgetting the fact that man was as positively under the Divine government before the fall, as he was and is since his apostasy, you make the remarkable discovery that, in this state of "warfare of man with himself," the soul and body, each contending for the mastery, Divine and human governments "became an *actual necessity of his condition*." The reason is obvious! "For it is only by reducing his lower [physical] nature to its original subordination and harmonious position, that an equilibrium will be established and his primordial happiness regained." (Page 106.) Supposing this to be the object of government, what a grand display of human and Divine wisdom and works, to subdue and reduce man's "lower physical nature" to subordination to his "*pure intelligence*," or mind, as the only means of regaining his "primordial happiness," while an insect could paralyze the rebel's powers, and render them perfectly harmless in an hour! If your doctrines be credited, what an enormous error the religious world has been in for nearly nineteen

hundred years, with Christ, Paul, and Peter at its head—teaching “except a man [his soul, not his ‘lower physical nature’] be born of the Spirit he can not enter the kingdom of God;” and that “the heart [not the ‘lower physical nature’] must be purified by faith.” What heresy, to be laboring for the regeneration of the soul and the purifying of the heart, when all that is necessary to restore man to his original happiness is to reduce his lower nature to subjection to his *pure mind!*

Again, according to your theology, the work, in converting sinners, must be performed on their bodies—their “lower physical natures”—and not their souls; and of course there is but little, if any, use for the agency of the Holy Spirit or the purifying grace of God. Dear Doctor, men of intelligence, who are not acquainted with the *fanaticism* of the pro-slavery spirit, will wonder how it is possible that any man of sense and talents should involve himself and his system in such monstrous absurdities, not to say gross heresies. The solution, however, is the cause of slavery demanded it, and you had to obey, or to abandon one of the assumed strongholds of your beloved system of slavery. Having made the body, or “lower physical nature” of man, the medium by which the mind communicates with the material world, and also made it the *seat of human depravity*, and then

having got up this "fierce war" between the *depraved* body and the "*pure*" soul, the imminent danger arises "of extinguishing his own liberty by the law of habit," and of losing his freedom by the "*will* becoming enslaved to the basest passions of fallen nature," (page 128,) "losing the power of self-control," and becoming "confirmed in the habit of submission." Hence you say, "Now the will is, like all other faculties of the mind, subject to the great law of habit; and, if not checked, restrained, according to the true idea of government, a *habit* of submission is formed, which, if not early dissolved, becomes a confirmed habit. The will, instead of being the governing power of the mind, becomes, in truth, the faculty governed. *It has lost the power of self-control.* It has become the slave of passion, confirmed in the habit of submission." (Page 112.) Fortunately, however, for the fallen race you have found a remedy—a *panacea*, in "government," . . . "absolute government," . . . "an absolute despotism," . . . "extreme form of despotism," . . . "absolute control by others," . . . and, "not to accord . . . this extreme form of control would be a practical denial of natural rights." (Pages 113, 114.)

Here, then, we have at last the world's evil and its sovereign remedy—the depravity of man's

“lower physical nature” in rebellion against his “*pure* intelligence”—mind; and an “absolute government—an extreme despotism”—to subdue the rebel to its “former subordination,” and to preserve the *will* from “extinguishing its own liberty by the law of habit,” and to “restore man to his primordial happiness!”

Dear sir, I will not stop now to examine your mental philosophy in its relation to government other than to show that it contradicts the experience of man, it contradicts the Bible, and it contradicts itself. It is matter of universal experience and observation with mankind, that it is only by the exercise of the *will* that men resist, break up, and overcome *habits* of any kind. Moreover, if the “power of self-control” be lost, by “habit” or any thing else, man ceases to be accountable for his actions, and can feel no guilt for any thing he may do; but men do experience guilt and condemnation for their crimes, however strong their *habits* of vice and sin may be. It contradicts the Bible. Your theory makes the “lower physical nature” of man the *seat of depravity* as the result of “deprivation” merely; and you apply a physical remedy—“an extreme despotism”—to a moral malady—human depravity. But the Bible everywhere teaches that the mind or soul is the seat of this dreadful moral disease—depravity—conse-

quently, prescribes a moral and spiritual remedy—the truth, grace, and Spirit of God—to enlighten, regenerate, and, through the blood of the atonement, to sanctify the soul. But it contradicts itself. What is *submission* to the “absolute control of an extreme despotism” but an *uninterrupted and positive* HABIT; the direct and necessary *opposite* of SELF-CONTROL? Hence, the remedy you prescribe is precisely the evil you propose to cure! A palpable contradiction!! This will appear still further when your principles are applied to the cause you labor with so much zeal to sustain—the system of slavery.

I have not forgotten, nor do I intend to overlook the fact, that you apply all the machinery of absolute control, despotism, etc., in the premises, to “infants and minors,” and I also recollect the fact that all this learned labor on the case of minors and infants is to prepare a platform on which to build the system of involuntary, perpetual slavery. It is for this purpose you toil so hard to find, or create, analogies between their case and that of slaves; but you will remember, dear sir, that I have already more than once fully exposed the fallacy and absurdity of that view. I however again remind you that so far is the domestic relation of minors and parents from being that of despots, and serfs, or slaves, and the domes-

tic government "an extreme despotism," that the *will of God*, distinctly revealed, is the authoritative *law* governing their reciprocal duties and obligations. "Fathers, bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right." Parents have no authority to govern *contrary* to the will of God; and children are not bound to obey contrary to the Divine will. Now, the case of "infants and minors" and that of slaves are, in their main features and facts, *analogous* or they are *not*. If they are, you are entitled to the honor of discovering a fact involving great *moral* principles which the Bible has failed to reveal; if they are not, your process of reasoning is grossly *sophistical*. Let us examine:

1. Minor children are, by Divine authority, placed under the care of their parents as their natural guardians, and the Divine will, which excludes from the relation every idea of despotism, is the rule of government; while slaves, according to your own showing, are placed under "an extreme despotism;" and, indeed, if you had remained silent on the subject, the slave laws of the south fully demonstrate the fact. 2. The government God has authorized over minors detests the idea that they are articles of commerce, and as such may be placed under the absolute control of



the laws of property as "chattels" in the hands of their parents. But under the government of the slavery system, the slaves are held to be, "to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatsoever, chattels in the hands of their owners." 3. This government, appointed for minor children, is specially designed to enlighten their minds and consciences, develop and mature their virtues, and in every respect to perfect their whole character for the responsibilities and dignities of free citizens and members of Christian communities; and the results which every-where follow the faithful observance and administration of this government, clearly demonstrate the divinity of its origin.

But the system of slavery places its subjects—its victims—the slaves, under a government skillfully constructed, and specially designed to exclude from the minds and consciences of the slaves the light of literature and science, and all general and useful knowledge of every kind; and that keeps them in gross ignorance of their own true character and natural rights, and of every thing else that would enlighten, develop, and elevate humanity above an unconditional, perpetual submission to the commands of a taskmaster, however unjust, oppressive, and barbarous such commands may be. Yet, in the face of these unquestionable facts, you make the erroneous and

more than ludicrous statement in regard to slaves, "Any other form of government would be, in their case, as well as in that of minors, a practical denial of their rights; because it would result in the annihilation of their essential rights; that is, the enslavement of their wills to the basest passions of fallen nature." (Page 128.) Such a falsity, contradiction, and absurdity neither requires nor merits refutation or comment. Need I search further for your assumed agreement between the case of "infants and minor children" and that of slaves? Sir, if my personal knowledge of you did not forbid it, I might suppose that you had treated the subject ironically; or that you had intentionally trifled with a grave question with a view to render it ridiculous. The case of minors and slaves analogous! or the government divine Wisdom and Goodness has ordained for minor children, and that framed and sustained by slavery "despots," analogous, of the same character; and intended to produce the same or similar results!! What other system except that of slavery would have the effrontery to assume such an *agreement* between institutions where Heaven has ordained that nothing but *contrasts* can exist!

Having demonstrated that no such analogy as you have assumed exists, I shall not attempt to

reconcile your position with either logic or reason, but will notice it from another point—the “law of habit” in respect to the slaves. In the case of minors, and that of an “uncivilized race that may chance to dwell among us”—the slaves of the south—your great fear is lest they should “extinguish their liberty by the law of habit, the will having lost the power of self-control,” and become “*confirmed in the HABIT of submission.*” Hence, they, and especially the latter, must be placed under the control of an “absolute and perpetual despotism.” But what is the *design* and the *results* of this despotism in the case of the slaves but to form, train, and compel them into the most inveterate *habit* of unconditional, perpetual submission? The whole machinery of slavery is constructed and worked on the very principle of “*annihilating*” even the desire of self-control, and to reduce the slave under the “*law of habit*” to the most abject, uncomplaining submission to the will of an owner, or “negro-driver.”

Light and knowledge are excluded from their minds, threats are denounced, curses are poured upon them, the lash is applied; and, in not a few instances, they are tortured in a manner that makes civilization blush; and all to subdue them to the “law of habit” of absolute submission. Moreover, they are not only denied the right to

exercise their own will, but, as a general fact, are put under the absolute control of the will of those who have not the fear of God before their eyes; and who, themselves, are governed and controlled by the worst passions of depraved humanity. I will not detain you here to enumerate the "appetites, propensities, and passions" which *control* many of those who control and subdue the poor degraded slaves to the "law of habit" of unconditional submission. The tens of thousands of mixed color, and the almost *white* among the slaves, indicate some of those "propensities," and also the kind of control exercised over them to prevent them from "extinguishing their liberties by the law of habit!" And this is "the doctrine of natural rights applied to government," and to prevent slaves from "losing the power of self-control!" and to reduce their "lower physical nature to its former subordination to the *pure* intelligence, and to restore them to primordial happiness!!"

It would be trifling with intelligent minds further to expose this, worse than weak, defense of the odious system of American slavery. Write on, Doctor. Give us another "*text-book*" on slavery. A few more "such victories will annihilate your army!" There are a few other items in this wonderful lecture deserving a little attention. You inquire, "*What are the rights of men in the*

*savage or uncivilized state?*” and then applying this question to those “dwelling apart from civilized society,” and beyond the limits of the government of civilized communities, you reply, they “have a natural right to protection under given circumstances, and freedom from oppression under all circumstances, . . . and reasonable exertions to elevate their moral condition.” (Pages 123, 124.) “They have no right to claim, nor is the state under any obligations to allow them an equal participation in the sovereignty of the state—allow them a control in the affairs of government—share the authority to regulate our relations, domestic and foreign; and even to participate in governing our families.” (Page 125.) Allowing this view in the main to be correct, your process of reasoning most strangely “jumps” to the conclusion that, because no obligation exists to grant them the above privileges when beyond the limits of our government, therefore we have a perfect right, with the sanction of Heaven upon the operation, to go among them and secure by violence, fraud, and all other means possible, as many of those “savage or uncivilized” persons as can be obtained, and to bring them by force into the “civilized community,” and not only withhold from them all those social, domestic, and political rights and privileges, but to reduce them and their

unoffending posterity to unconditional, abject, perpetual slavery, and subject them to all the accidents and laws of property!

These are precisely the facts as to the history of slavery in this republic. Dwelling beyond the limits of our government and territory, they had no right to claim social or political privileges among us; therefore, we had a right—for you have quoted with approbation, that the origin of the African slave-trade was a “*Godsend!*”—to bring them into our country with a cruelty which makes humanity shudder, and to chain them in hopeless slavery as human property! This is logic fully worthy the dark cause it vainly attempts to defend; and you will have a thousand reasons for thankfulness if it does not throw its sable shadows over your reputation as a Christian philosopher and divine.

You aggravate the fallacy of your defense of slavery by attempting to *ignore* the positive distinction between absolute and perpetual slavery, and social equality, and political sovereignty. Your whole process of argumentation assumes that there is no medium or middle ground between these two extremes. By your logic they must either be absolute slaves or political sovereigns. But as error is always blind, and in the end generally contradicts itself, so you have given a pretty



fair specimen. You say, "It is the proud boast of all our native citizens that they have always lived under a free government; and yet they were brought up to the age of twenty-one under a pure despotism." (Page 128.) Now, although it is not true, and no one acquainted with the facts, unless his judgment is perverted by prejudice or interest, who believes a word of it, that we are "brought up" in the domestic relations—as has been clearly shown—"under a pure despotism," or under a despotism of any kind, yet it is as true as the sun shining in the heavens, that the free native citizens of this republic were "brought up to the age of twenty-one" the free children of free parents, under a system of government which neither degraded them to the condition of *slaves* nor elevated them to political *sovereignty*, but that protected them in the enjoyment of *liberty*, against the power of all men to own them as "chattels," or to throw them into the market as merchandise; and that secured to them the *right* to acquire an education, read the word of God, and to use all the means that divine Wisdom has ordained for the development and perfecting of their whole humanity. And yet, sir, according to the depraved teachings of the slavery system, there is no middle ground or medium between men being slaves—chattels in the hands of their owners—or

political sovereigns! Dear Doctor, have you no fears that men of intelligence will hold your work in contempt for its carelessness in overlooking these facts, or, for what is much worse, a design to conceal them as necessary to make out a show of defense of the monstrous system of involuntary, perpetual slavery? Grant the slaves similar privileges and rights—equally removed from slavery and from political sovereignty—with those of free minors, and it will not only terminate the injustice of slavery, but, in like manner, they will become enlightened, elevated, and prepared for the privileges, responsibilities, and usefulness of free men. And I may add that, for withholding those rights and privileges, Heaven has a controversy with this *nation* which is rapidly approaching a crisis; and without deep repentance and thorough restitution, the chastisement will be equal to the crime.

In a course of false argumentation, one absurdity frequently prepares the way or creates the necessity for another. As a justification for holding in perpetual degradation the enslaved millions in the south, you say, "They are not only uncivilized, but are now in a position to exert an evil influence, which, in a separate state, they could not do, although they might dwell upon our borders. . . . Hence, the demands of their position must be met by laws appropriate to an uncivilized

people." (Pages 126, 127.) That is, 1. They were perfectly harmless to us before they were brought into our midst. 2. We brought them among us, by cruelty and violence, contrary to their will. 3. Though they are among "the most docile and submissive portion of our race," and have never forfeited their liberty by crime, yet, if free, they "might exert an evil influence"—they might do wrong, they might commit crime. 4. Therefore, we will withhold from them the right to learn to read the Bible, and also the common means of civilization; will prejudge them as guilty before any offense is committed, and sentence them, and their equally-innocent posterity after them, to the punishment and degradation of perpetual, absolute slavery! What a mockery of justice!! What an outrage on humanity, and an insult to common-sense!!! The logic, morals, and justice would be equally sound that would send the Rev. W. A. Smith, D. D., and his plain reviewer, to the state-prison for life, on the assumption that if not in the penitentiary, "we are in a position that we might exert an evil influence" by committing murder. O slavery, how thou dost degrade even those who attempt to defend thee! One remark more and I will detain you no longer with this letter.

Your real friends, Doctor, can but regret that

you should come down from the dignity of a Christian philosopher and doctor of divinity, to fling a *sneer* at the “managers of looms, spindles, and other machinery”—page 125—a class of community constituting the bone and sinew of civilization and of the civilized world; and without whose labor and skill you would be performing the duties of your various offices of scholar, philosopher, and divine in a state of *nudity*, or only clothed in skins! But those you attempt to *sting* will scarcely feel the pain; they may, however, have some temptation to treat such impotent wrath with contempt, knowing that it is perfectly harmless to all except its author.

Hoping to address you again, with but little delay, on other topics in your lectures, I remain, as ever, your personal friend,

J. H. P.

## LETTER VIII.

## THE ASSUMPTION THAT BECAUSE GOD SANCTIONS CIVIL GOVERNMENT HE SANCTIONS SLAVERY, EXPOSED.

God sanctions human governments, and human governments sanction slavery ; therefore God sanctions slavery—The absurdity exposed—The true state of the case—Patriarchal slavery considered—Slavery among the Jews in the days of the Savior examined—The supposed allusions to slavery among the Jews in the parables and discourses of the Savior—Though slaves are not literally “brutes,” the slave laws treat them all as property.

REV. W. A. SMITH, D. D.: Dear Doctor,—Your sixth lecture claims to be “THE ABSTRACT PRINCIPLE OF SLAVERY DISCUSSED ON SCRIPTURE GROUNDS, AND MISREPRESENTATIONS OF THE PRINCIPLE EXAMINED.” I will not conceal the fact that, from your acknowledged abilities, ripe scholarship, and ardent zeal in the support of a system which holds millions of human beings and their posterity in perpetual bondage as chattels, I expected a logical, lucid, methodical, and masterly defense from your pen; but so far I have been sadly disappointed, and particularly in this lecture on the “Scripture grounds” of this grave question. It is but little more than a repetition of what you have reiterated

in your previous lectures; consequently, I have already brought to light and refuted most of its errors and absurdities. I will, however, notice it somewhat in form, though at the risk of being charged with following your example in repetition.

1. Your first general argument is fully worthy the cause you try to sustain. "Do the Scriptures sanction government?" you inquire, and answer, "That the Bible itself is only a system of government, will not be disputed." . . . "Moreover, it sanctions civil government in most express terms: 'Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.' . . . This was an injunction to obey Cæsar's government. In that government it is well known the slavery element greatly predominated; but little room was left for the exercise of self-control; political sovereignty being denied to the people. In declaring government, even in this extreme form of controlling the wills of men, to be his appointment, God established the *principle as in itself right.*" (Page 135.) Your argument then in form is: God appointed and approved the principle of Cæsar's government "as in itself right." But Cæsar's government in principle maintained the system of slavery in "its extreme form." Therefore God approves of the system in this extreme form, and, of course, the Scriptures sustain slavery—American slavery. Now, you



must mean that, or you have written nonsense; for, if we suppose the contrary of either of the propositions, or the conclusion, or all of them together, what you have said has no more to do with your subject than it has with the geology of the moon. An argument pretending to support a righteous system, but that will, with equal force, conclude in support of the vilest crimes that men can perpetrate, deserves no formal notice. The government of Cæsar not only supported the principle and practice of slavery, but sustained the hiring of professional torturers to torment and torture the slaves, and also compelled them to fight with wild beasts, threw them to beasts of prey to be devoured, authorized murder and idolatry in all its corruptions, and almost every other vice and crime that corrupt human nature could perpetrate. But, according to your logic, God appointed and approved Cæsar's government; therefore, God and the Bible sanctioned all these abominations!!

The conclusion is precisely as logically sound in this case as in that of slavery, and to suppose either is little less than blasphemy. Although God recognizes the principle of civil government among men, he neither appoints nor sanctions wicked and oppressive governments or rulers. He tolerates them just as he does wicked men, till

they are either reformed by his truth and justice, or destroyed by his judgments. In the case you have cited, from Romans xiii, 1-7—the strongest case probably in the Bible—this subject is distinctly guarded, and the governments he sanctions clearly specified. “The powers that be are ordained of God.” For what purpose? “For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil.” . . . “Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same; for he is the minister of God to thee for good;” “Render, therefore, *tribute*, custom, or honor, to all to whom either is due.” God sanctions governments and rulers when, and just so far as, they are a terror to evil-doers, and a praise and protection to those who do good; but the heaviest judgments are denounced against them when they are a terror to those who do good, and protect and patronize the evil-doers. On the principle that Christians are not to render evil for evil, and, “if it be possible, as much as lieth in them, to live peaceably with all men,” God enjoins it upon them to submit to civil governments, though in their general character wicked, just so far as they can do it without defiling their consciences and no farther; and to bear with Christian patience the evils to which they may be subjected, till those wicked governments are reformed, or removed, and others established.

The martyrdom of the inspired apostles is a lucid, practical comment on this subject. Paul, who enjoined submission "to the powers that be," while they were "a terror to evil," himself suffered martyrdom under "Cæsar's government" rather than submit to it wherein it was wicked, or to sin against his conscience. Till you can prove that God approved and appointed the principle of all the idolatry, corruption, and crimes, and even the murder of his own apostles and saints under "Cæsar's government," you can not even torture this text into the support of either Roman or American slavery. 2. Your cold, unscriptural comment on "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and, "therefore, do unto others as you would have them do unto you," has already been examined and refuted. It is there shown that you have either to concede that you have not given the meaning of the text, or to exclude benevolence from the Gospel of Christ—either of which must be an incurable calamity to your cause. I will, however, add a further remark here. The context is frequently the best, and, indeed, the true comment or explanation of the text. Such is the fact in this case. In the context the Savior has given a twofold illustration of that broad benevolence implied in this universal rule of Christian action.

1. That benevolence, which God has implanted in the bosoms of parents for their children. "If a son ask bread, or a fish, of his parent, will he give him a stone, or a serpent?" The parental experience of mankind forbids it. And why? because God has established the great principle of benevolence in the hearts of parents, not merely to meet the wants of their children, on the ground of sheer justice, but where justice does not forbid, to pour upon them all the benefits benevolence can invent. 2. If parents thus delight in imparting blessings to their children, "how much more shall your Father, which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him!" "Therefore," in the light of these examples—human and divine—of universal practical benevolence, in all cases where justice does not forbid, "all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." The application of this rule as Christ designed it, namely, as parents love and treat their offspring, and as God does his children, would sweep the curse of slavery from the globe in an hour! 3. Your third position has much less of argument or proof than of mere dogmatism. You assert that "Abraham, Lot, and others held them [slaves] in large numbers;" . . . "That the Jews brought slaves with them from Egypt;" and "that the

tenth article of the Decalogue provides to protect the right of property in slaves"—page 139—that “the Savior has recognized this law, as it was originally designed to be, of universal obligation and force”—page 140—and that “the law further provided for domestic slavery *in perpetuity*.” (Page 141.) Of the Jews you say, “At no period of their history were they without domestic slaves; and, when the Savior dwelt among them, the whole land was filled with such slaves;” . . . . and that “the hospitalities of every family of which he partook, were probably ministered to him more or less by domestic slaves”—page 143—“And certain it is, that this relation is made the subject of some of his most eloquent allusions, and the basis of his most instructive parables.” Matthew xxiii, 10; Mark x, 17; Matthew vi, 24; xiii, 24–28; xxi; xxv. (Page 144.)

Your argument and conclusion from all this is: “If this be true, it is really passing strange that Jehovah himself should provide, in the organic law of the Jewish commonwealth, for the working of a system of domestic slavery, and, by a series of laws drawn up under this constitution, set such a system in actual operation; and that the Savior of mankind should also give, according to every legitimate interpretation that can be put either upon his language or his conduct, his unqualified

approbation to that which was so flatly opposed to all his doctrine! It is saying but little of all this to affirm that it is grossly absurd! It can appeal to no doctrine that we are aware of for its defense, unless it be the kindred absurdity that the *will of God* is not the rule of right, in this sense, that it always *conforms* to that which, *in itself, is right*, that is, good; but that it is the rule of right in this other sense, that it is absolutely, in itself, the only rule of right; and that, in the case under consideration, domestic slavery was right for the Jews, because God so willed it; but the same thing in principle, under similar circumstances, would be wrong for any other people, because in regard to them God had willed differently: thus assigning to Deity the power to make *the wrong the right, and the right the wrong!*" (Page 145.) I have here also allowed you to speak at length, that there may be no mistake as to your views on this subject; and, doubtless, you have given it all the plausibility that the case will admit of. Now, your whole process of argumentation by which you reach your conclusion is a mere "begging the question." You have conceded in terms, what, however, I have clearly proved, and what you could not deny without doing yourself injustice as a scholar, namely, that the term in the Hebrew of the Old, and the Greek of the New Testament Scriptures, translated in our



English version servant, is generic. You say, "The term *servant* is the GENERIC form, and evidently means, a person who is controlled by the will of another." (Page 142.) Now, it has already been clearly evinced that whatever may have been the classical meaning, or use of those terms, the universal Bible use, as translated *servant*, is *generic*, and necessarily implies *species*, as there can not be a *genus* without *species*, nor *species* without *genus*.

I have also shown in the light of unquestionable facts, that slavery in general, and American slavery in particular, is a *species* belonging to the *genus servant*; and that it differs from all other *species* of servitude recognized with approbation in the holy Scriptures. And, moreover, that this specific, essential, and absolute difference consists in the *fact* that masters have an absolute and perpetual right of property in the persons—soul, body, and spirit—the entire humanity—of the slaves, and their posterity after them; while the specific, essential characteristic of all other *species* of servitude, or subordination, known and approved by the Bible, under the *genus servant*, absolutely excludes this *property* element. So demonstrably true is this, that, if you deprive slavery of this *right of property principle*, you destroy it in an instant; or if you apply this principle to other *species* of subordination, or servants, you immedi-

ately rob millions of their liberty, as free men, and put them under the laws of property as chattels. The presence of this principle in the one case is *its only* life; in the others their *certain death!* With your memory refreshed on these facts, I repeat, you have only begged the question; for you have not even attempted, in a solitary instance, to prove that the servitude in the cases you have quoted from Scripture belonged to the *species* in which this property element, as “chattels in the hands of their owners,” is its only life and being, but in every case you have assumed that such is the fact; while a mere glance at those Scriptures will demonstrate the falsity and absurdity of the assumption.

I will only make a passing remark here on the case of “Abraham, Lot, and others,” as that will be attended to in a subsequent letter. My denial that the Hebrews brought slaves, *as chattels*, with them out of Egypt is worth just as much as your affirmation. And is it not truly a grand conception, that the Hebrews, in their miraculous escape from *slavery*, amidst the consuming fires of God’s judgments upon Egypt for the sin of *slaveholding*, and their obstinate resistance of *emancipation*, should themselves be guilty of the same crime, by bringing with them from the place of their own bondage and degradation a “multitude of *slaves*

as chattels in the hands of their owners?" A worse species of slavery than themselves endured in Egypt! Now, Doctor, if they did *not* bring slaves as *chattels* with them from Egypt, your assumption is preposterously false; if they *did*, you have yourself solved one of the monster difficulties that you have attempted to throw in the way of those who oppose your system; namely, "that the will of God can not make the right to be the wrong, and the wrong to be the right." Here, according to *fact*, it was *wrong* for the Egyptians to hold slaves; and, according to your *assumption*, it was *right* for the Hebrews. On the same principle that, by the will of God, it was wrong for the Egyptians to hold slaves, but right for the Hebrews to hold them, it may have been right for the Hebrews—which, however, I deny, that they ever held slaves as chattels with the approbation of God; but wrong for Christians. You can take either position as may best suit your convenience; but I repeat the denial, and demand the proof, that God ever *sanctioned*, as *morally right*, slavery in its chattel and property sense, either among heathens, Hebrews, or Christians. Heaven's frowns and curse hang over the whole system!

The same facts and conclusions apply to your assertion that the Jews were a "nation of slaveholders" in the days of the incarnation of the Sav-

ior, and that he sanctioned the system of slavery. For if the *will of God* made it a *national crime* deserving and receiving the most exemplary punishments in the Egyptians, but a *national virtue*, meriting and receiving the sanction of the Son of God, the same *sovereign will* can make it a crime, instead of a virtue, in every nation on earth. In the light of these facts, your assumption that the "hospitalities of every family of which the Savior partook, were probably ministered to him by *domestic slaves*," is a bold assertion, which merits no respectful notice whatever. You are entirely "certain" that the relation of master—owner—and slaves—property—"is made the subject of some of the most eloquent allusions, and the basis of some of the most instructive parables" of the Savior; consequently, the system has the sanction of the divine Redeemer. In this you assume, 1. That *master* means legal owner in the sense which gives absolute right of property, and that *servant* is equivalent to property in the sense of chattels. 2. That the Savior sanctioned, and stamped with Divine approbation, whatever he made the "basis of a parable," or "alluded to for illustration." To suppose the contrary of these assumptions, is utterly to ruin your whole argument here. What are the facts? The Savior made the cases of the "foolish virgins," the "rich man who fared sump-

tuously" and went to hell, the "prodigal son," with numerous others, the "basis of instructive parables;" and alluded to the "man who built his house upon the sand," the "unjust judge," and "the children of this world," to illustrate important truths, principles, and duties. But did he thereby sanction all, or any of these cases? The supposition would not only be false, but a slander upon the Divine character. Did he use the terms master and servant as equivalent to *owner* and *property*? That he did is absolutely essential to your cause.

Terms that are synonymous are convertible, and either may be used and the sense will be precisely the same. Try this rule on some of your quotations. You say, "God has provided to protect the *right of property in the slave*;" and I have demonstrated that such *right* can have no existence only in the *persons*—soul and body—of the slaves. Thus, Matthew xxiii, 10, would read: "Neither be ye called *owners*, for one is your *owner*, even Christ;" and, of necessity, ye are *chattels* in your owner's hands. Mark x, 17: "Good *owner*, what shall I, your *chattel*, do that your *chattel* may inherit eternal life?" Matthew vi, 24: "No *property* can serve two *owners*." Matthew xiii, 24–28: "So the *chattel* came and said to its *owner*;" . . . "the *owner* said to the *prop-*

*erty*, an enemy hath done this," etc. Matthew xxi: To substitute *property* in the place of *servant*, in the parable of the vineyard, is so "grossly absurd" that I will not annoy you by putting it on paper; and yet your argument is nonsense if it will not bear this interchange of terms. You appear to have been forgetful of your reputation as a logician and divine, when you quote Matthew xxv to prove the right of property, by Divine authority, in the persons of slaves. I would gladly spare you, if I could, and do justice to the subject, but truth and righteousness require that such unwarrantable liberties with the word of life, to sustain the odious system of slavery, should be exposed. "The kingdom of heaven is as an *owner* traveling into a far country, who called his own *property*, and delivered unto his *property* his goods, or property; and unto one *property* he gave five talents, to another *property* two, and to another *property* one; to every *property* according to its several ability. . . . Then the *property* that had received five talents went and traded with the same and made other five talents. Likewise the *property* that had received two, it also gained other two. But the *property* that had received one went and digged in the earth and hid its *owner's* money. . . . After a long time the *owner* of these *properties* cometh, and reckoneth



with those *properties*. . . . So the *property* that had received five talents brought five talents more. . . . His *owner* said, Well done, good and faithful *property*, thou hast been faithful, . . . enter into the joy of thy *owner*." The same result followed in the case of the *property* that had received two; but to the *property* that had received one, "its *owner* said, Thou wicked and slothful *property*, . . . take the talent from it and give it to the *property* that hath ten talents, . . . and cast the unfaithful *property* into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." What a silly fellow that *owner* was! Why did he not take him to the *slave-market* and sell him at auction? He might have got something for him, and *any price* would have been better than to have destroyed the lazy rascal!

Now, sir, ludicrous as your doctrines make the pure word of God, there is no escape for you, but either to admit that *servant*, in the text, does *not* mean *slave*, or to deny that *slave* implies the *right of property* in the *person*—soul, body, and spirit—*of the slave*. And in either case you will contradict yourself and your assumptions, or the slave laws and the universal practice of the south, and will virtually abandon the system. Divested of the perversions of slavery, this parable abounds with instruction. We have the distinct idea of

what is transpiring every day—in states where slavery is an abhorrence to the whole community—of men of capital furnishing others with means on mutual agreement, and both parties sharing the results—the profits. In those business relations, the capitalists are *relatively* the superiors, and the operatives *relatively* the subordinates, but both equally free, and their interests reciprocal. The whole beautifully illustrates the gifts and grace of God and their improvement by men, by which the latter are saved and the former glorified. O, slavery, how base thou art, for seducing the manly talents of even Dr. Smith into the humiliating work of thy defense!! For your comfort, however, Doctor, I will say that in examining the “misconceptions, or misrepresentations” of Wayland, Channing, Whewell, and others, you triumphantly prove that “the constitution of the human mind is in flat contradiction to the idea of the absorption of the will, the conscience, and the understanding of one man into the personality of another.” You also demonstrate that “Paul and Peter, who wrote [you say, though some are silly enough to doubt it] with special allusion to slaves under these laws, [the Roman and Grecian codes,] so far from regarding this personality as lost and swallowed up in the humanity of the masters, expressly assumed their personality and responsi-

bility." (Page 148.) You have made it perfectly clear that the dirty slaves are not absorbed, or swallowed up in the clean, nice persons of their masters—so far from it, that while their tidy masters are luxuriating in the splendid mansion, the slaves are toiling in the cotton, sugar, rice, or tobacco fields, under the "patriarchal" watch-care of a "steward," overseer, or driver; and, moreover, you have made it plain, no doubt to your own mind and the minds of the friends of the system, that if they do not behave themselves right they ought to be flogged; for "the ruler beareth not the sword in vain." And, furthermore, whoever saw a master bleeding, or weeping, or heard him sighing, or groaning in pain after his unruly chattels had been thoroughly drubbed? The idea is preposterous, and yet it would be physically and "logically" true if the "personality of the slave was absorbed in the humanity of the owner." And have not these doctors and professors sense enough to know that, if there was any truth in this "absorption" doctrine, the masters would begin to turn a little dark by this time, having absorbed so much of that color from their slave-property? and are they so stupid as to have overlooked the fact that, from the faded black of thousands of the slaves, the indications are pretty clear that if there is really any process of "absorp-

tion" going on, it is, in fact, in the other direction? and that it is much more likely the masters will be "absorbed" in the persons of the slaves, than that the slaves will be absorbed in the humanity of their masters? Will not these naughty doctors and professors conduct themselves with a little more propriety hereafter, since they have been so well scourged?

Still further, you have been equally successful in demonstrating that "slaves are not brutes," that is, they are not *literally* horses, cattle, and hogs, but that they are *literally*, and in fact, men, women, and children, and the Bible says they are of the same blood with Dr. Smith and his reviewer, and all other men, for "of one blood he made all flesh that dwelleth upon the whole earth." But for a small defect or two, your victory over these troublesome doctors and professors would be complete, and might teach them a lesson they would not forget for at least a week. The first particular I notice is, you have most eloquently refuted what no man ever believed or taught; namely, that the slaves are *literally* "absorbed" and "swallowed up" in the *literal* "humanity" of their masters.

Another defect is, you have either carelessly overlooked or studiously avoided dropping a word in regard to how the slave code in the south views and treats this question. I believe these slave

laws are frequently troublesome "tell-tales" to those doctors of divinity who attempt to defend the system of slavery. Suppose, Doctor, that some "rude fellow of the baser sort" were wickedly to break an arm, put out an eye, or otherwise disable your slave for labor, and the offender were prosecuted for damages, would reparation be made to you as owner, or to the slave as sufferer? These talkative slave laws tell us that *you* would get paid for an arm or an eye, and not the slave, precisely as you would recover damages for injuries done to an ox or a mule! If this is not an "absorption," literally, of the person of the slave into the literal "humanity of the master," it is a literal absorption and swallowing up of the natural, just, and equitable *rights* of the slave into the unrighteous usurpation of the owner.

And, as to slaves being "brutes," you have proved, and every body knows, they are men; and it is equally notorious, though you have cautiously abstained from hinting the fact, that the slave laws of the south recognize them as *property* just as they recognize "brutes" as property, and commercially treat slaves and brutes precisely alike. They are executed, sold at auction, paid on debts, mortgaged, and given away, and worked wholly for the benefit of others just as "brutes" are. True, they are in many respects held accountable to laws

as men, while they are treated as chattels in the hands of their owners. And this fact is another demonstration of the injustice and barbarism of the system of slavery.

Your conclusion, up to this point in your lectures, "that the abstract principle of the institution of slavery and the principles of natural rights coincide, and that both have the unqualified approbation of holy Scriptures," has been proved to be absolutely erroneous, and, in many respects, intensely preposterous.

I have presented facts and argument showing that what you call the "philosophy of the principle of slavery" is a sheer fallacy, a mere farce; your theory of natural rights worse than a mere caricature; and that holy Scripture abhors and denounces its anathemas against the whole system of slavery and human oppression in whatever form it may be found; consequently, your sweeping conclusion has no more strength or force than the "baseless fabric of a vision."

Intending soon to resume the grave question at issue between us, I remain, as ever, your friend,

J. H. P.



## LETTER IX.

SLAVERY LEGALIZED BY THE LENGTH OF  
TIME IT HAS EXISTED IN THE  
COUNTRY EXPOSED.

Slavery legalized and rendered morally right by the length of time which has elapsed since its introduction into this country—The utter falsity of the position exposed—No analogy between robbing others of their lands, and robbing men of their liberty—Time may legalize land titles, but can never give one man the right of property in another—The African slave-trade was originated and sustained by public opinion in Great Britain and America, therefore it was morally right—On this principle every practice, however vile and corrupt, that public opinion sustains is morally right—The idea that the African slave-trade was a “missionary God-send” intensely absurd.

REV. W. A. SMITH, D. D.,—Your seventh lecture, the character of which is not very clearly indicated by its title, “THE INSTITUTION OF DOMESTIC SLAVERY,” is something of a curiosity, and deserves some attention. It is upon the whole a very lame, if not also, in some respects, blind attempt to justify slavery on the ground of the length of time which has elapsed since its introduction into this country, and a defense of the origin of the African slave-trade! You repeat the fallacy which I have exposed more than once, that

there is no medium between absolute and perpetual slavery and political sovereignty, and then boast that “you are entitled to the full benefit of the presumption in argument.” This claim rests wholly upon the assumption that you have established all your previous positions; but it has been evinced, with a force that your logic can not refute in an age, that the vital points on which you rely for the support of slavery are incurably erroneous, and many of them contradictory and absurd. I am gratified, however, that you have “waxed warm” in this lecture, and, of course, I may imitate your example in reviewing you. The main proposition is, that slavery—“American slavery as it is, and as it should be perpetuated—is right and just on account of the length of time it has existed in this country.” You state the objections to this assumption thus: “Slave property was originally acquired by robbery and violence, and, therefore, can never become lawful property;” . . . “an act of robbery can never extinguish the original right of the person robbed, or confer original title upon the robber.” To this you reply, “The *doctrine* assumed in this argument is, that possessions unjustly acquired originally, can never become legal possessions; . . . this doctrine in its application to the African is, that they were stolen while in a state of freedom, and

reduced to a state of slavery. But we deny both the *doctrine* and the hypothetical assumption on which it is based.

“1. If this *doctrine* be true, it will follow that all wrong is without any remedy, except in the few cases in which things may be restored to their original state. This would be a deplorable state of things indeed. It would work special disaster to our northern brethren.” (Pages 159, 160.) Because, you say, the “Indians were the original and rightful owners of this whole country,” consequently the right of soil was unjustly acquired; and if time and a change of circumstances will not rectify and legalize an original wrong the people of this republic, and especially the “northern brethren,” have no just right to the American soil. You proceed, “The great wealth of the northern states can be regarded only as so much dishonest gain! Really, it is time they were looking to the duty of restitution! But the disaster of this doctrine does not exhaust itself with our northern brethren. The Norman conquest of Great Britain is that by which all the land-titles of England are held to the present day. . . . Now, it is well known that the Norman conquest was the most lawless piece of injustice and butchery, the record of which ever disgraced the pages of human history! Upon the basis of the doc-

trine in question, it is equally certain that there is scarcely an honest shilling in all England. Nor is this all; the present titles of all Europe, Asia, and northern Africa are traceable, more or less remotely, to a source equally cruel and unjust! Thus there is an end pretty much to all honesty as to the possessions of the civilized world! Surely, the absurdity of this conclusion is sufficient to invalidate the soundness of the doctrine from which it arises." (Pages 161, 162.)

You say those wrongs were generally committed "by the heads of governments," and the original parties having passed away, the "original wrong was ultimately placed beyond all remedy. . . . In this state of things the question of title, Who shall own these lands? becomes an original question. And in this state of the case the simple fact of present *possession*—there being no one to claim antecedent possession—according to the fundamental belief of mankind, confers moral title, and should therefore be legal." (Page 163.) Upon this principle you charitably add, "We have no difficulty in vindicating the honesty of the descendants of the Puritans, or the land-titles of the civilized world, or the thousand other titles which are equally involved by the absurd doctrine under consideration. Nor do we find any difficulty in allowing them a

just title to all the proceeds of the African traffic, even though it should be conceded that their forefathers were, as they characterize them, a set of mere *man-stealers!*" (Page 164.) As this aspect of the question is of the highest moral and practical importance, I have given your argument and conclusion at length, desiring that you should speak for yourself. Before I proceed to examine them, allow me, Doctor, to suggest, by the way, that if all the "live Yankees" of those "northern brethren" down east—the "descendants of the Puritans"—are not duly thankful, and do not properly appreciate your kindness in giving them a "*quit claim*" to all their lands and the "proceeds of the African traffic," they ought to be scourged again "within an inch of their lives!"

But to return to the question: If the system of perpetual, absolute slavery is not sustained by this process, its case will be well-nigh hopeless; for you have succeeded full as well on this point as you did in demonstrating that the *person* of the slave is not *literally absorbed* in the *humanity* of the master. But your triumph in this case, as it was in the other, is not without its troubles. Here, again, your logic is either blind, or has most carelessly blundered, or has lost all self-respect! The whole strength of your argument and position here is—"although the lands referred to were wrested

from their original and rightful owners by violence and robbery, time and circumstances have invested a 'moral and legal' title in the descendants of the original robbers, such descendants being now in the possession of the lands; '*there being no one to claim antecedent possession, according to the fundamental belief of mankind time CONFERS MORAL TITLE.*' Consequently, admitting *the fact* that the Africans were brought here by violence and robbery, the original parties being dead, time and circumstances have invested those who are now in possession of them as slaves with a 'moral and legal' title—'*there being no one to claim antecedent possession.*' ”

The above is your argument in all its force, or what you have written on the subject is a ludicrous farce! 1. You have *real estate*—nearly all the lands in Asia, Africa, Europe, and America—in the *premises*, and *personal property*—human beings claimed as slaves—“chattels in the hands of their owners”—in the *conclusion*! Now, unless you can demonstrate, what is literally impossible, that the *same* principles and rules in morals, law, and logic, will apply with *equal justice* to both those objects—*land* and *human beings*—your argument is pure *sophistry*! 2. You have *inanimate matter*, which has no *rights* whatever, in the premises; and *intelligent human beings*, who have vast and import-



ant *rights*, in the conclusion; not only sophistical but grossly absurd!! 3. You *assume* that as there are only two parties claiming possession in regard to those lands, the same is true in the case of slaves. This is positively false!!! To save your argument, not to say your reputation as a logician, you must show, with a clearness equal to the interests involved, that there is such an *analogy* between the case of lands and that of men in bondage; that what may be in truth affirmed of one, when the question of *human rights* is involved, may logically and truthfully be affirmed of the other. Human rights are natural, moral, and social, and have relation to the laws and government of God, and to the duties and interests of this and the future world. You have, then, either to abandon this boasted claim in favor of slavery, or to demonstrate, either that lands have the same intelligence, natural, moral, and social rights, and sustain the same relations to the government of God, and to the duties and interests of time and eternity, that belong to, and that characterize men when claimed as slaves; or, that men in such condition have no more intelligence, natural, moral, and social rights, and sustain no other relations to the Divine government, and the duties and interests of the present and future world, than the unconscious and passive earth! To affirm either

would be false and profane. Were not the claims of truth and justice more imperative than the sympathies of personal friendship, I would not expose the absurdities in the arguments of one for whose reputation I entertain a high regard. But justice requires that this favorite fallacy in defense of slavery should be further exposed till it is driven out of the community.

In all your eloquent discourse on "land-titles" you have supposed only TWO PARTIES—the *original owners*, and *those who robbed* them of their rightful possessions; while, as matter of fact, the *object claimed*, being inanimate matter, could have no rights, nor, by any possibility, *lose* or *suffer* any thing whatever. But are those the facts in regard to slaves? Precisely the opposite, and that, too, by the appointment and authority of God. For I have shown in my former letters that, from every relation established, and every form of government sanctioned by him, he has excluded the principle of slavery, and has recognized the intelligence, duties, rights, and interests of man. Hence the egregious fallacy in assuming that in the case of slavery there are only *two parties*, and that the *object claimed*—the slave—has no *original rights*, and has nothing to *lose* or *suffer*. The cases are perfectly dissimilar; in the case of lands, the object claimed has no rights and can lose nothing.

In that of slaves, the object claimed is an intelligent subject of God's moral government, invested with natural and moral rights, and sustaining sacred relations to God, his law, and the changeless interests of eternity; and has, as a third party, a *claim to himself*, founded in the principles of eternal justice against the claims of all first and second parties whatever. The first claim set up by the first man for the *right of property in his person*, no matter by whom, or on what grounds, was in itself a LIE; and every step in prosecuting it by reducing its victim to slavery was a diabolical outrage upon justice, the constitution and rights of man, and the relations and order ordained by Jehovah.

It was the man *alone* who was robbed of his liberty—robbed of himself, his natural rights, the special gift of God, and thereby made a slave; and no matter who committed the first offense, it was outrage and robbery upon the person and rights of the man in reducing him to a slave; and every time the man changes hands as a slave the robbery is repeated and perpetuated. It was robbery in the premises, and, though it be repeated till the judgment trump of God arrests the outrage, it will still be robbery! And neither time nor circumstances can change the *moral character of slavery*, unless God should change the whole character and

relations of man; and also his own moral government, so as to release parents and children, husbands and wives, and rulers and subjects, from the moral obligations which he has rendered inseparable from those relations; and also release them from their moral obligations to "glorify him in their bodies and spirits which are his." If God should do all this, time and circumstances may change the character of slavery; but till then it must remain unchanged and an unchangeable robbery! It originated in the worst forms of human depravity, ripened into violence and robbery, and perpetuates its existence by the same crime. Time and circumstances change the *moral character of slavery*, and render injustice and robbery, repeated and perpetuated, *morally right* and acceptable to God, as they may *legalize the title to lands!!* Slavery merits no better fate than to be rendered thus ridiculous by the impotent struggles of its admirers for its defense! When time and circumstances become potent enough to change injustice, theft, robbery, oppression, and cruelty, into justice, honesty, benevolence, mercy, and *moral purity*, they may change the nature of slavery.

But before all that occurs you and your reviewer will see the true character of slavery in the light of eternity; where, doubtless, you will have

widely different views of the system from those you now entertain and attempt to defend. In view of your whole performance under this head, I might retort your own language to others, that it is a "stupid gratuity, . . . of which the author should be profoundly ashamed!"—page 170—but I spare you, though not your system. I now follow you to the only ground on which you may hope to evade these consequences; namely, your denial that the African slave-trade commenced in violence and robbery. You say: "We also deny the hypothesis upon the basis of which this false doctrine has been made to apply to the Africans of this country; that is, we deny that African slavery in this country had its origin or was founded in cruelty and robbery." (Page 164.) "There is no reason to doubt the statement of history, that many slave-ships originally—as perhaps is still the case to some extent—acquired their cargoes, some by robbery and violence, and some by purchase. The sufferings of what is called the 'middle passage' are, no doubt, correctly stated in history." . . . "There may have been cruel wrongs, and under circumstances of even greater aggravation than those recorded in history." (Page 165.) Whatever may have been the facts in these cases, you state that "the actors have long since gone to their account," and



were no more the originators and authors of the African slave-trade than were the artisans of Boston the founders and builders of that city. "They were necessary agents, and whether they performed their work well or otherwise does not affect the question as to the founders and builders of the African slavery in America." After stating there must have been a "*potent cause* for bringing the African into this country at all," you inquire emphatically, "What, then, was this cause?" and then reply, "But one answer can be given to this inquiry. On it there can be no division of opinion. It was the state of public opinion in Great Britain, and the state of public opinion in her colonies in this country at the time. This state of public opinion demanded their introduction and employment as slaves, and hence they were introduced and so employed." (Page 166.) "This being the true origin and foundation of the system, if it had its foundation in *robbery* and *violence*, it was because public opinion, through that long period, was so eminently corrupt as to set itself, deliberately and of full purpose, to work to perpetrate *robbery* and *violence*, without any redeeming virtue; for crimes admit of none. Was this so? Can we be prepared to believe it? In default of all history at this point to detail the origin and progress of public opinion on this



subject, we are left to form our judgment from our knowledge of the men whom we know to have participated more largely than any others in directing public opinion in their day, and to the history of the times in which they lived." After stating that African slaves were brought into this country in the seventeenth century, and that the trade was continued "under the sanction of law till the years 1778 and 1808 inclusive," and that at an early day "public opinion was matured on this subject both in England and in the colonies," so that for a long period it sustained the practice of bringing slaves directly from Africa into this country, you add, "Now, we affirm that the position postulated in regard to this case is among the most palpable absurdities that can be conceived. The character of the men who controlled public opinion in that day, and the patriotic Christian age in which they lived, utterly disprove the gross assumption that they yielded themselves up to falsify the truth and the conscience that was in them, and became a mere corporation of land pirates and freebooters!" And to demonstrate that the men, whom you claim to have formed public opinion on the slave-trade, were not a mere fiction you give us the following list: In England, "James I, Cromwell, and William III; Burnet, Tillotson, Barrow, South, with Bunyan and Milton, and also Newton

and Locke. In the colonies, during this time, there lived Cotton Mather, Brainerd, Eliot, and Roger Williams; Winthrop, Sir H. Vane, and Samuel Adams, with Henry, Washington, and Franklin." (Pages 167, 168, 169.) To suppose that "these great men, some of them eminently good men," . . . "were no better than a horde of mountain robbers"—which must be the inference if they formed "public opinion," and "public opinion originated and founded the African slave-trade," and if that trade is a system of violence and robbery—"is the shameless position strangely postulated in regard to these men and their times! We scruple not to affirm that this is more than a stupid gratuity! It is a gross calumny upon humanity itself, of which the authors should be profoundly ashamed." (Page 170.)

Having now given your defense, in all its force, of the *inhuman, horrible slave-trade*, with the grounds on which you rest that defense, I am deeply impressed that not a few will conclude, "It is the miserable cant of one who would storm by prejudice what he can not demolish by argument." (Page 151.) You have given us, however, inadvertently, another specimen of the true character of the system—*savage-like*, it puts its prisoners in front, virtually saying, "If you shoot

us your balls must pass through your own friends; spare us, vile and cruel as we are, or kill your own children and friends!" We will see, however, whether the foes may not fall and the friends be saved. Your argument for the *moral justice* and *righteous character* of the *African slave-trade*, rests wholly on the *assumption* that it was sustained in its origin and practice by "public opinion in England and her American colonies;" and that public opinion in the case was morally right and just, because it was formed under the *influence* of those great men and their coadjutors, and that their *influence* in forming public opinion was morally just and right, because "many of them were eminently good men." That this is the whole strength of your position in this case is easily demonstrated by supposing the *contrary* of any or all of those puerile assumptions. If they were *not good* men they would form a corrupt public opinion; and the African slave-trade being originated and carried on under the sanction of this corrupt public opinion, would be what it was, is now, and ever must be, an infamous, diabolical, and bloody business. Or, if they were good men but *did not* form public opinion, or if no such public opinion existed, the same conclusion follows, as far as your argument is concerned. So that to break one link of this rickety chain will explode the whole argument,

and give its fragments to the winds! Doctor, did you write for idiots, or did you presume that men of intelligence would swallow your bold assumptions, which have not even the down of plausibility to hide the nudity of their deformities! My denial of your assumptions is worth just as much as your unproved assertions, and leaves the subject just where it was before you exhausted so much learning and labor upon it.

But I can not release your system on such easy terms. To present your argument in a more condensed form: Any system or business which "public opinion" sustains and prosecutes, *is morally right and just*. "Public opinion, in Great Britain and her American colonies," sustained and prosecuted the African slave-trade; therefore, the African slave-trade is morally just and right. By this very convenient process you prove the *godliness* of this horrible traffic. And by the same operation *national crimes* of the most revolting character may find an advocate in the logic of Rev. Dr. W. A. Smith. For example: "Public opinion," in Great Britain, sustained and prosecuted the war of 1776 against her colonies in America; "public opinion" sustained, carried out in practice—and still does—Mohammedanism and the persecution and murder of Christians; "public opinion" sustains and practices the most debasing, inhuman, and cruel forms

of *idolatry* throughout the heathen world: therefore, the barbarous war of England upon her colonial children in America, Mohammedanism and heathenism, with all their moral corruptions, crimes, and cruelties, were, and still are, *morally just and right* in the sight of God and man; and, of course, our fathers were rebel sinners for resisting oppression and seeking freedom, and we are fools for spending millions in sending the Bible and missionaries to convert and save Mohammedans and heathens!

Still further: "*Public opinion*" sanctioned and sustained Hebrew slavery in Egypt, and of course it was morally just and right; and, according to your pro-slavery logic, divine Providence committed an egregious blunder in breaking up that godly and "patriarchal" business amid the fires of his terrible judgments! Public opinion, the fluctuating offspring of the interests, prejudices, pride, ignorance, or depravity of men—instead of the *infallible word of God*—THE MORAL RULE of *action and conduct*, in a case involving the liberty and highest interests on earth and in eternity of millions of mankind!! Will not posterity be astonished that a Protestant doctor of divinity, in the middle of the nineteenth century, boldly avowed the infidel principle, and for no other purpose than to aid in riveting faster the chains of



slavery upon the millions of his fellow-men who are in bondage in this republic? But, sir, your reasoning is equally false and absurd when viewed from another point. Suppose I allow all your claim for public opinion, that it *sanctified* and rendered the African slave-trade morally right and just; then, by logical necessity, should that public opinion be changed and reversed, the slave-trade must become morally wrong and wicked. But public opinion in England and America has denounced this traffic in human beings as an outrage upon justice and humanity, and an intolerable curse, which should be swept from the face of the whole earth. These facts, on your theory, involve the absurdity that *public opinion* can change a *moral rule* of action, not only regardless of the law of God and the relations he has established among men, but in opposition to both. To avoid these consequences, should you say the African slave-trade was, and is, morally just and right in itself, regardless of public opinion, you would concede that your great ado about public opinion is a mere deceptive farce, and has nothing to do with the *moral* aspect of the question, which is the only issue now before us.

Again: your whole claim on public opinion, in support of this barbarous business, is a sheer fallacy. I need not pause here to prove to you that



the African slave-trade is now carried on to a fearful extent, and that the presumption is, with greater atrocities than ever characterized the diabolical business before; and that not a few Americans are engaged in it, and that thousands of their victims are chained in slavery in this country; and that millions of dollars are pocketed by those gentlemen—villains, who ought to be in the penitentiary for life—as the proceeds of this inhuman and unholy traffic in the souls and bodies of men. Did *public opinion* in this or any other country originate, and does it sustain, the present covert system of the slave-trade with its complicated villainies and appliances, by which annually untold thousands of human beings perish in battle, and by starvation and suffocation in the holds of slavers, and being thrown overboard, and by cruel scourging, and other means which the light of eternity alone will reveal; while thousands more are chained in hopeless bondage till death releases them from the tyrant's grasp? No man who expects to be believed will answer in the affirmative. Here, then, are stubborn facts which contradict your whole theory that the African slave-trade depends, or ever did depend, on public opinion either for its existence or its moral character. So far from it that, while the righteous indignation of Protestant Christendom, with the exception probably of a por-

tion of the southern Churches, is frowning upon and opposing the accursed system, it is still, through the deep depravity, cunning, cupidity, and lust of gold, of a *comparatively few*, with unabated energy spreading its desolations among countless thousands of its victims annually! Precisely in the same spirit, and on the same principle, and for the same object, the *few*, without consulting "public opinion," and waiting for it to "mature," originated the African slave-trade, and sent their victims to the American colonies and British islands. And if historical facts had not been ignored, overlooked, or suppressed, your lectures would have showed us that public opinion was neither formed nor consulted till the *few* had brought the *evil* upon the *many*; and when public opinion was waked up on the subject, public opinion was divided; and though corrupt government, political depravity, and gold succeeded for a time, there was an unceasing struggle by the friends of humanity and justice, till public opinion was enlightened, and, in the light of the law of God, triumphed, and the abominable system was abolished in both countries, and the American government marked it as a crime meriting a felon's death!

Your dilemma that we must either admit the *godliness* of the African slave-trade, or implicate the "great and good men" whose names you have

paraded on your pages as a "band of robbers and freebooters," is so clearly a "miserable cant to storm by prejudice what you can not demolish by argument," that, since I have exposed your whole theory as a compound of contradictions and absurdities, it really merits no further notice, other than a flat denial of your preposterous assumptions. But, after all, the climax is wanting to complete and ornament the grand picture of the African slave-trade; but, Doctor, you are on hand, and will not leave a work of such magnitude unfinished. Hence, after a glowing description of the ignorance, depravity, and paganism of Africa, "stretching forth her imploring hands, appealing to the benevolence of the world for relief," it was discovered that the African slave-trade could be baptized "*a great missionary enterprise,*" and "the idea was caught at in both hemispheres as a '*Godsend*' for Africa, for the colonies, and for a common civilization." (Page 172.) And no sooner was this grand "*'Godsend' missionary idea caught,*" than this noble work was commenced in the tears and blood of its *beneficiaries*, and has been carried on ever since to the present hour; and in the exuberance of its "benevolence," with a truly-Mohammedan zeal, has fomented wars and spread cruelties over the land to an extent not known before in pagan Africa. O, ungrateful Africa!

why are not thy shouts of joy still heard in the land? why are not thy songs of praise feasting the ears and thrilling the heart of the Christian world, and thy loud halleluiahs going up to heaven for the priceless blessing of Dr. S.'s "*missionary Godsend*" of the glorious African slave-trade? by which thy native soil has been baptized with the blood of thy sons, millions of thy children slain and hurried into eternity, shrouded in the darkness of paganism, and millions more enslaved in this and other countries in hopeless bondage and equally-hopeless heathenism!! The African slave-trade a "benevolent missionary Godsend!" The idea is scarcely one remove from blasphemy!! O, Slavery! if thou wert not a monster, with a heart of adamant, and cheeks of brass, thou wouldst blush for thine own impertinence and depravity, and the pitiable attitude thou dost put those into who attempt to defend thee!

Dear sir, you have indeed timely suggested that, "in default of historic record" on these subjects we must depend on other sources in making up a judgment in the case; and your *pious imagination* has served your cause much better than the cold facts of history could have done; and as the material cost but little you have drawn on it with an unsparing hand. And did not the evidence and reasons, *a priori* and *a posteriori*, the convictions of common-

sense and justice, and of our common humanity, and the testimony of history and tradition, the spirit of Christianity and the law of God—all enter an indignant protest against your little less than preposterous assumptions in order to sanctify a system marked by the darkest catalogue of crimes that ever outraged the rights of the human race, your defense of the bloody system might be recognized by strangers, if detached from other topics, as an ordinary specimen of juvenile college declamation. As it is, however, in the judgment of the impartial your reputation must suffer, and the performance be pronounced wholly unworthy the position and abilities of the man. It might be expected that the *infidelity and avarice* of the age would attempt to defend the origin and operations of the system; but it is utterly inexplicable that a Protestant minister, a doctor of divinity, should thrust himself into the arena and stereotype his testimony in favor of a system of cruelty and crime, at which humanity shudders, Christianity blushes, and over which indignant justice holds the thunders of his law, only awaiting the repentance and restitution of the perpetrators to avert the stroke, or the order of God to strike the blow and sweep the curse of slavery from the earth, though it should be with the same wrath that desolated Egypt for the same crime! With another



remark or two I will leave you for a time to enjoy the glories of your defense of the "missionary" character and the godliness of the African slave-trade; and, for your comfort, I can assure you with confidence, you will have but few competitors for such a palm, at least by men of piety and self-respect.

You no doubt felt safe in asserting that "the number of Africans who have died in the communion of the several Churches in this country—and who, therefore, we may assume, were Christianized by their residence in this country—exceeds the whole number of all the heathen who have been Christianized by the labors of all the Protestant denominations of Christendom since the days of Luther"—page 174—for the case is of such a nature that no one can prove the negative; but it is equally clear that you can never prove the truth of your assumption. Every friend of humanity would be gratified to have some evidence that what you have said here is true; but, on the other hand, none who have examined the subject can resist the conviction that, for every slave who has been converted and died a *true* Christian, there have been *a hundred souls* sent into eternity in all the darkness of heathenism, through the *direct* and *indirect* operations of the African slave-trade. In the sanguinary wars excited by it in



Africa, the horrors of the "middle passage," the process of "seasoning"—starved, flogged, and worked to death—doubtless the light of eternity will reveal double that number. God never authorized any such process for the conversion of the heathen; it is, in its whole character and operations, an earth-born scheme full of corruption, and an outrage upon the genius of the Gospel and the order of Heaven. Do you mean, Doctor, that the slave-trade, or slavery, is to have the credit for the conversion—instrumentally—of those slaves you talk about? If you do you are deceived yourself or mean to deceive others.

While the African slave-trade and slavery in this country have been the means of sending millions unconverted into the endless world, I deny that they ever were or will be the means of converting a single soul. Every slave that has been converted, or ever will be converted, instead of being indebted to the system of slavery for his salvation, has been, and will be, converted and saved through the instrumentality of the Gospel, *in spite* of the ungodliness of the depraved system. To assert that ever a soul was converted to God and saved through the African slave-trade, or the system of American slavery, would be as false as the father of lies, and blasphemy against the Gospel of the Son of God.

Hoping, without delay, to renew my interview with you, on the grave question of perpetual, involuntary, unremunerated human bondage, I still remain your friend and faithful reviewer,

J. H. P.

## LETTER X.

GOVERNMENT SUITED TO THE SLAVES IN  
THIS COUNTRY.

The form of government suited to the slaves in this country—It must be either a military or patriarchal despotism—Slaveholders the only persons competent to judge—The right of property is the issue—Slaveholders being a party have no right to decide the question—“The necessity of the institution of domestic slavery”—As the north have not allowed the Africans among them political equality, the south have a right to enslave the Africans among them—The free people of color have not materially improved their condition—Slavery is the natural state of the Africans—The history of Liberia contradicts these positions.

REV. DR. SMITH,—Your eighth lecture—“DOMESTIC SLAVERY, AS A SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT FOR THE AFRICANS IN AMERICA, EXAMINED AND DEFENDED ON THE GROUND OF ITS ADAPTATION TO THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE RACE”—notwithstanding its sounding title, is little other than a modified rehearsal of the matter of former lectures, of some of which we have had nearly a dozen editions. Assuming that all your previous positions were conceded as true, but which I have shown to be incurably false, and also reaffirming the fallacy, which has been fully refuted, that there is no middle ground or medium

between political sovereignty and *absolute* slavery, you proceed: "The African is now here. Whether right or wrong originally is not the question before us. He is here. What form of government is best suited to him, and those with whom he is necessarily associated?" (Page 177.)

After affirming they must exist among us as a "separate and inferior race," under a subordinate government, you say it "must either assume some form of military government, or it must conform to the patriarchal species of government—a kind of family government—that is, the domestic form for which we contend. And as between a subordinate military or patriarchal form of government, both as regards the expense and the comfort, there can be no controversy, we may consider the claims of the patriarchal form, or the system of domestic slavery, as established in this case." (Pages 178, 179.) This, Doctor, is settling the "controversy" in quite a summary manner; and although it may be satisfactory to you, there are others who have interests and rights involved in this "controversy" who do not believe a word of what you affirm—that the government must be either a military despotism, or absolute perpetual slavery, for that is what you mean by "*the patriarchal form!*" You found it very convenient to dismiss the question, "whether they were brought here originally,

right or wrong," with scarcely a passing remark, although that question lies at the very foundation of the whole system of slavery. And I have shown, with a clearness and force which defy successful contradiction, that slavery—which means *property in the person of a man*—originated in violence and robbery, not robbing a third person of his property—his slave—but robbing the man of his liberty and rights, the gift of God—robbing him of himself, and reducing him to the condition of property, by making him a slave; and that slavery is perpetuated on the same principle and by precisely the same process to the present day. And, in like manner, it has been shown that neither *time*, nor *circumstances*, nor *both together* can change the moral character of the *robbery*, and convert it into a Scriptural, godly, "patriarchal institution!"

And, although it were admitted in all its force that the Africans brought to this country were slaves in their own land, it would not relieve your case in the least; for it matters not when or where they were enslaved, it was done by robbing *them* of their divinely-authorized rights. If it originated in Africa it was Africa's sin of robbery, and the slave-trade has transferred it to this country, and perpetuates it as the unpardonable and un-reformable crime of the guilty system. Having re-

moved the sophistical covering of your foundation, on which you rest the claims of a "military," or a "patriarchal despotism," as the only government at all adapted to the slaves in this country, I need only deny your conclusion as a blind fallacy, of which any other system except that of slavery might be "profoundly ashamed." In this, as in other instances on this subject, it might be supposed that you use language to conceal instead of to convey ideas. In your soft use of the terms "military" and "patriarchal," did you intend that the uninitiated should understand a system of government which commenced in violence and robbery, and that is perpetuated in the same moral character, by reducing human beings, whom God formed to be free, to perpetual degradation and slavery, subjecting them to all the laws and accidents of property, and their posterity after them? If you did, you are extremely unfortunate as a scholar in the selection of terms; if you did not, you have concealed facts vital to this question. True, you say those who first commenced the African slave-trade from this country "negotiated a purchase with those who had long held and treated them as slaves." By what authority did they "hold and treat them as slaves?" By none other under heaven than that of *robbery!* Either they, or some one before them, had robbed



the man of his liberty and natural rights, and reduced him to the relations of chattels as a slave; and, although he should change owners ten thousand times, it would not wash out the crime of robbery, and every one who receives him after the original robbery is an "*accessory* after the offense." And, according to the slavery code, this system of perpetuated violence and robbery is a "patriarchal institution," and must have "a patriarchal form of government" to perpetuate the villainy!!

If righteous wrath could move the dust of the dead, the tombs of the departed pious would be vital with holy indignation for the slander of ascribing a system of perpetual robbery, with all its machinery of chains, prisons, handcuffs, gory whips, domestic ruin, and burning of human beings alive, to patriarchal paternity! But, furthermore, your whole theory of laws and government for slaves, as maintained in your lectures, is based, *in fact*, on a principle which is repudiated by every just and legitimate government in the civilized world; and which, if it were not excluded from every code, would produce universal anarchy by destroying all government, if it did not in the end destroy the race itself; namely, "*that a man may TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIS OWN WRONG, and plead the commission of one crime in justification of its repetition, and the perpetration and perpetuation of*

*others.*” That slavery had its origin in robbing the man of his freedom and natural rights, as the only means of reducing him to the condition of property as a slave, is a simple *fact* which no *honest* man of intelligence will deny. And as it has been demonstrated that no length of time can extinguish the *right* of the *man* to *himself*, the conclusion is resistless that the slaves were brought to this country by continuing the original wrong, and are retained in bondage on the same principle of wrong. Now, your doctrine is, that because they are here—though brought among us by a system of tremendous, unmitigated *wrong*—the same system must be continued, lest the successors of the original wrong should sustain some loss, or be subjected to some inconvenience; therefore, it must be perpetuated to the latest generation of the sufferers—the robbed—the poor slaves! The ethics and logic would be equally sound for the villain to say: “I have knocked Dr. W. A. Smith down to get his money, and now if I leave him he will revive and either pursue me and recover his funds, or inform against me and have me punished as a robber; therefore, in self-defense, I will render my safety perpetual, if it is even by taking his life, as costing less than a ‘military despotism,’ and as the only ‘patriarchal government’ suited to the case of Dr. Smith, now lying robbed and bleed-

ing at my feet; and, besides, I being a party concerned, understand the case much better than any of those 'northern fanatics' can, and, indeed, I am the only one competent to judge; consequently, the 'controversy is at an end in this case'—Dr. Smith must be rendered harmless, *because* I knocked him down, bruised, mangled, and robbed him in the premises!!”

I shall not stop here to discuss in detail forms of government for the African population in this country, other than to say, that any government that ignores or disregards the individual *rights* and the *domestic relations* which God has ordained for universal application in human society, is a *wicked government*, and sooner or later will meet the doom of wicked institutions. Therefore, the government that recognizes and protects these rights and relations will at once and forever paralyze the cruel kidnapping-hand of slavery, and will protect in freedom every child born of slave parents, and will place them under the direct influence of the means of Christian civilization as provided in the Gospel of the grace of God. It will also take all those who are now slaves from under the *laws of property*, protect them in the rights of the domestic relations, and prepare them for freedom, just as speedily as it can be done without infringing the *moral rights* of others. Any other government,

whether claiming to be based on expediency, the moral condition of the slaves, or whatever else, if it ignores or disregards the claims of justice, and the relations God has established, is an ungodly government, at war with humanity and God, and in the end must incur the retributive curse of Heaven! Such in fact is the real character of the government for which you contend, substituting the worldly expediency of men for the wisdom and justice of God!

Your implied claim, that because the "northern states" have not opened "the road to the offices of trust, honor, and profit," nor secured equal social rights and privileges for the free-colored population among them, therefore the "southern states" are justified in chaining in perpetual bondage, ignorance, and degradation, the Africans who are among them, is fully worthy the cause of slavery, but not of any special notice from your reviewer. The logic is, if one section of the country inflicts a partial wrong upon a small portion of the Africans, the other section may inflict a permanent and perpetual wrong upon the masses of the Africans: the reiteration, in another form, of the doctrine, that the commission of one crime may be pleaded in justification of the perpetration of others of much greater magnitude.

Planting yourself again on the old absurdity,

which I have had occasion to expose a dozen times already, that the Africans must either be elevated at once to "*political sovereignty*," or placed under an "*extreme despotism*" of perpetual slavery, as chattels in the hands of their owners, you gravely assume that the southern people are the only competent judges in the case, and they, having decided the unfitness of the Africans for the former, are fully warranted in inflicting upon them the latter. You affirm, "The intelligent and honest portion of the country will scarcely fail to allow that the judgment of the southern people, as to the character and capabilities of the Africans, is entitled to the highest confidence, and may be regarded as an authoritative settlement of this question." (Page 188.) "This," quoting your own language to others, "is perhaps the coolest piece of impertinent self-conceit to be found on record!" THE RIGHT OF PROPERTY—*under the laws of humanity, of justice, and of God*—is the grave question at issue, involving the highest interests, present and future, of millions of immortal beings now living, and millions yet unborn. The slave claims his freedom, the gift of God, and the state for which his constitution—his intellectual, moral, and physical nature, with all the desires, instincts, and breathings of his immortality—were formed by the wisdom and power of God. He claims his liberty *himself*, in

the name of humanity, in the name of Christian benevolence, in the name of common justice, in the name of God, as revealed in his word. "The southern people" claim the *right of property in his person*—his soul, body, and spirit—the right to use *his person* as a chattel; to use him for their benefit alone; to set him up at auction, buy, sell, give, or gamble him away at pleasure. This is the true issue—unlike the case of lands confiscated centuries ago, the original owners dead, and no one to claim title or possession—*THE ORIGINAL OWNER is here, in person, claiming directly for himself both the title and possession of that of which he has been robbed, and is still robbed by slavery.* In whom now is the *right of property* in this controversy? It is indeed questionable whether the "record" can furnish another as "cool a piece of impertinent self-conceit," that, in a case like this, one of the parties should claim exclusive right "authoritatively to settle the controversy!" This, however, is but another instance of the reckless despotism of slavery.

You have, either with or without design, "dodged" the real question—the right of property in the person of man—and made a "*false issue,*" the mere form of government best suited to the Africans in a state of involuntary perpetual bondage; but, sir, neither you nor your cause can



escape so easily. Your equivocations have all been anticipated, and your claim of exclusive right to settle this momentous controversy indignantly repudiated. An impartial jury have already been "impaneled," and *the true issue*—the right of property in the person of human beings—is now being tried at the bar and in the court of Christendom—the court of the civilized world! and the Supreme Judge will execute the final sentence with the certainty of immutable justice. The testimony against the system—the right of property in man—is accumulating in ominous magnitude. The tears, blood, and dying agonies caused by the "slave-catching system" in Africa; the indescribable horrors, sufferings, and death in the "middle passage;" the chains, handcuffs, and prisons in this country; "the slave-pens" in the metropolis of this republic, and the "barracoons" in the south; the agonies and infamy of the "auction-block" in the slave markets; the outrages committed on the domestic relations, and the cries and sorrows of families forever broken up in this world; the millions gone and going into the future world from this professedly Christian land in a state of barbarism; for your own "moral affidavit" is, that after *seven generations* of slaves have passed into eternity from this Christian country, the slaves of the south are still "uncivilized," and in

a "state of barbarism"—all testify before Christendom and the civilized world that the system has wickedly deprived its victims of their natural and dearest rights, is of diabolical origin, totally corrupt in character, a heartless, practical despotism, and an unmitigated curse to society. The verdict will soon be matured, and no one acquainted with the history of slavery in other countries, with the providences of God, and the design of the Gospel, can be in doubt as to the character of the decision, and the final destruction of the system in this republic. It will be doomed to inevitable perdition, as sure as justice reigns on the throne of God; and in rendering that decision, so far from respecting the "impertinent" claims of one party to the exclusive right to settle the "controversy," it will be promptly "ruled out," and that party may not in the end escape merited punishment for "contempt of court."

When justice is rendered to the slave, and he is treated as a man instead of a chattel, it will be the business of the nation, and not a few interested slave-owners, to say what kind of government he shall be placed under for the protection of his rights and privileges, and the development of his character and humanity. Dear Doctor, as your ninth lecture contains nothing new or important, I shall dispose of it in this letter. Al-

though it has a new title—"THE NECESSITY FOR THE INSTITUTION OF DOMESTIC SLAVERY EXAMINED BY FACTS"—it is made up mainly of old matter.

Like all other "swift witnesses" your great anxiety to make out a strong case materially depreciates the credibility of your testimony. You claim to have shown that "philosophy, natural rights, and holy Scripture" all sustain the system of slavery, and that God has sanctioned and rendered it as enduring as the decalogue. It might be supposed, if you really believed all this, you would be perfectly satisfied to let the "patriarchal institution" repose in safety on such a four-fold rock as that; but you have given unmistakable evidence of skepticism as to the truth of your premises, by attempting to prop the tottering fabric by a process that would render even a good cause suspicious.

This lecture is mainly an "*ex-parte*" and very partial statement of the unsuccessful efforts of the free Africans to elevate their condition in this country, and a case of "special pleading" against the cause of human freedom. Your position is, many or most of the liberated slaves have failed materially to improve their physical and intellectual condition; therefore, "it is the accident of his position that he is *free*, and not the law of his intellectual and moral nature that makes him so."

(Page 196.) This view conceals some important facts in the premises and perverts others; and the conclusion contradicts the constitution and consciousness of man, and impeaches the wisdom of God in regard to his moral relations. Many will believe that you designedly suppressed the fact that all the efforts of the Africans, in this country, to improve their condition have been made under greater disadvantages than any other portion of the entire population, whether foreign or native born. Their ignorance of letters and science, of the laws and customs of business; their want of habits of industry, economy, and self-respect; their almost entire destitution of means, and the withering influence of an unholy prejudice—all of which are the effects of the curse and cruelty of slavery, under which they and their ancestors have groaned and been degraded for ages—have all resisted their progress in improvements. And notwithstanding these formidable obstacles, and that a spurious civilization and a pseudo piety have excluded them and their children from the public schools, not a few have burst through those embarrassments, and with a soundness of judgment, energy of character, and a perseverance that would do honor to a high degree of civilization and a pure Christianity, have obtained a good practical and some a classical education; thousands

have acquired the means of support and comfort, and many have accumulated wealth. And the instances are sufficiently numerous to rebuke as with a voice of thunder, and, if they were capable of a blush, to mantle the cheeks of the advocates of slavery in a crimson of shame—of men raised from infancy to manhood, and middle age, in the ignorance and degradation of slavery, who have obtained the unspeakable boon from their “benevolent owners,” of commencing without a penny, but with the firmness of a man, and the heart and affections of a husband and father, and earning the means, purchasing their own and the liberty of their wives and children, and providing homes and comforts where free families live, love and worship that God who abhors the system which enslaves and degrades the works of his own hands and the purchase of his Son’s blood. While these cases are standing refutations of the slanders of slavery advocates, they are achievements of true manhood which—circumstances considered—will lose nothing compared with the triumphs of a Napoleon!

How intensely odious is that system, which, not satisfied with enslaving and degrading millions of mankind, but must conceal their virtues, and depreciate the efforts to improve their condition in society of those who have escaped from its chains! Again, on the same principle you ought to enslave

all those free white persons and families who, under circumstances vastly more favorable than those of the free blacks, have failed to improve their condition in life. Many of them commenced with fine fortunes and numerous friends, but died in the poor-house, and many of their children are following in the paths of their "illustrious predecessors." Why, Doctor, do you not, in the fullness of your sympathies for suffering humanity, bring the "Fugitive-Slave law" into requisition, or have one framed expressly for the purpose, and bring these poor, white suffering wretches into the "patriarchal" paradise of perpetual slavery, where they and their children could not only be amused by the novelty, but enjoy the exquisite pleasure of being carried—if they did not have to walk—to the slave-market, and of being sold on the auction-block as chattels or articles of commerce?

In your reference to "the colony of Liberia," you have inadvertently wounded fatally your whole defense of perpetual slavery. To discountenance emancipation in every form, and to rivet faster the chains of bondage on human beings, you give a graphic and glowing sketch of the attempts to colonize the Africans in the southern states, and add, "In every instance the owners have been compelled to resume the control of their slaves, to prevent them from becoming a tax on community,



and a nuisance in the neighborhood.” (Page 193.) Of similar efforts in other states you say, “With a few honorable exceptions, the free blacks are not as well provided for as the slaves;” . . . “they live by petty depredations on society;” . . . “their retrograde tendency is so obvious,” that but for some accidents “they would soon relapse into the savage state;” . . . “without the restraints of the domestic system [perpetual, absolute slavery] the tendencies of his barbarous nature are left, in a good degree, to take their downward way” to the savage and barbarous state. (Pages 194, 196.) This is truly a gloomy picture, and especially when you tell us that all this is traceable to intellectual and moral imbecility for self-government.” Who would have supposed that this mass of “ignorance,” “barbarism,” and “extreme degradation” could have furnished the material—men and women—with which, in less than forty years, to build up a colony or state in Africa, which challenges a parallel for success and prosperity in the history of mankind, and which “has already taken its place among the nations of the earth as a free and independent government?” and, as you truthfully add, “No colony has ever prospered as that has done. As a rising nation, it shares the sympathies of the civilized world. It is destined to become the asylum of the Africans

of America, and the center of civilization to the long-benighted continent of Africa, whither all eyes are turned as the oasis of hope in her desert history." You ask, "How has this hopeful colony arisen to its present position?" and answer, "It has been built up from the free colored population of this country; colonized by their own consent. Herein divine Providence has wisely discriminated the proper subjects for this great enterprise. His own established order of things has effected a judicious discrimination of the proper persons for the work." (Page 198.)

Few, if any, can fail to see the great incongruities, not to say contradictions, in which the defense of perpetual, involuntary slavery has involved you. You have either greatly *overrated* the "ignorance, barbarism, and extreme degradation" of the free people of color in this country, or you have wholly *underrated* their capabilities for self-government, or you have quite *exaggerated* the success and prosperity of the colony of Liberia. It is literally impossible that all can be true. None, however, who are acquainted with the facts, will charge you with the last. The colonization enterprise has succeeded beyond the most sanguine hopes of its most ardent friends and supporters; "it shares the sympathies of the civilized world," and its sovereignty and national independence have been ac-

knowledged by many of the national governments of the earth, although the pro-slavery influence has been, and still is, sufficiently potent in our government to spurn any such recognition from our democratic republican door—a reproach to the nation, and a mark of infamy upon the system of slavery! Every intelligent observer, therefore, will see that your defense of slavery stands fully convicted on both the other charges; for, notwithstanding the disabilities and embarrassments which “the free colored population of this country” are placed under—excluded generally from the public schools and the institutions of learning, “the crushing weight” of prejudice pressing them from every point, social and political encouragements withheld from them, and but few to sympathize with them in any circumstances—they have given the clearest practical demonstration of their capacity for self-government in the history of the Liberia colony, and have thereby refuted the ten thousand calumnies upon their true character and their capabilities for freedom. Your system may try to escape from these contradictions by claiming that the “few honorable exceptions” among the ignorance and barbarism of the free colored population, which you have been kind enough to name, constituted the patriotic band which planted that colony under peculiarly-discouraging circumstances, and

have raised and matured it into an independent republic—a sovereign nation, the admiration of the civilized world! Such indeed is your statement: “Those only whose intellects furnished the flint and steel from which the spark of liberty could be struck, and upon the altar of whose hearts the fires of freedom could be kindled to light their pathway to that far-off and inhospitable land, would embark in this great work.” (Page 199.)

But this burst of eloquence, with all its beauty, does not effect the escape, for you are intercepted by the authority of official statistical figures and facts, which clearly show that you either did not understand the case, or inexcusably misstated the facts. So far is it from being true that the republic of Liberia was planted and fostered, to its present national prosperity, by the choice spirits only from among the free colored people—“whose hearts throbbed with the pulsations of liberty”—that of the *nine* thousand colonists sent to Liberia, by the American Colonization Society, exclusive of a thousand or more sent by the Maryland State Colonization Society, from the years 1820 to 1855 inclusive, only 3,623 were born free, while 5,341 were born slaves. Of the latter three hundred and six purchased their own freedom; leaving 5,035—more than half the entire number of those who have built up the Liberia

republic, and who have surprised the civilized world with their intelligence, enterprise, and powers of self-government—who were “*emancipated in view of emigrating to Liberia.*” (*African Rep.*, No. 2, 1856.) With these facts before their eyes, it will require more than human eloquence to convince men of intelligence that, if the Africans in this country were allowed even the elementary principles of an education, the full enjoyment of the privileges of the blessed Gospel, and their domestic relations sacredly protected, they would not be capable of self-government, and civil and religious freedom; or that, while those rights and privileges are withheld from them, we are not perpetrating an outrage on justice and humanity, for which Heaven will hold us to a strict national accountability, and, if persisted in, to a fearful retribution. If the Africans of this country were allowed their rights, and treated as *men*, their improvements in character and condition would soon relieve you of the labor of constructing “extreme despotisms” for their government as *property*—“chattels in the hands of their owners.”

But, Doctor, with this successful experiment of African self-government and national prosperity in Liberia before your mind, you appear to grow hopeful and almost to forget that you are pledged to oppose “every form of emancipation,” and to

defend, as of Divine origin, perpetual, involuntary slavery in its entire property form. Of the Liberia republic you say: 1. "This rising nation is destined to become the asylum of the Africans in America, and the center of civilization of the long-benighted continent of Africa." 2. "That God, in his own established order of things, has effected a judicious discrimination of the proper persons—'the free colored population of this country'—for this work." 3. "That it is a general, and indeed an almost universal opinion in the south, [which you approve and defend,] that any thing like a system of emancipation, whether direct or gradual, by which the number of free colored persons should be materially increased in the southern states, would inevitably be followed by their indiscriminate massacre, as the only means of abating an insufferable nuisance." (Page 202.) Here are gross incongruities enough to bring a good cause into disrepute, and what support an odious one can derive from them I leave others to judge.

1. The Liberia republic is to be the asylum for the Africans now in America. 2. They must go there "*the free colored population*" from this country. 3. The Africans of America are now slaves, and "any system of direct or gradual emancipation that would materially increase the number of free colored persons, would inevitably be followed



by their indiscriminate massacre!" And now, Doctor, how under the sun are you ever to get the Africans of America to the Liberia republic in Africa? They must go there free if they ever go, for they can not go as slaves. But they can never get there free unless they are emancipated; and *you oppose emancipation in every form*; then how on earth will you get them to this asylum? In your learned efforts to avoid ruinous consequences, varnish absurdities, and reconcile contradictions—all of which must be done in defending the system of human bondage and degradation—we are forcibly reminded of the county commissioners who, in their official dignity, gravely resolved, 1. That they would build a *new jail*; 2. That they would build it of the *materials* of the old jail; 3. That the *old jail should* stand till the *new* one was *built!* Your attempt to find American slavery "very strikingly exemplified by the history of the remnant of the Canaanites, who still dwelt in the land after its subjugation and settlement by the ancient Israelites"—page 203—is fully worthy the cause for which you have adduced it, but does injustice to yourself both as a logician and divine.

There is but one point of agreement between those cases, and that is their *sinfulness*. The Canaanites were incurably devoted to idolatry, and sunk irreformably in depravity and national sins.

Retributive justice decided to destroy them, and by express command commissioned the Hebrews the ministers of his judgments; but for their unfaithfulness in this work, and their sin in sparing the guilty, God announced to them that those they had spared in the land "should be snares and traps unto them, and scourges in their sides, and thorns in their eyes, till they perished from off the good land which the Lord their God had given them." This sin, and its consequences, followed them through all their subsequent history; and in the end, for it, and other national crimes, God annihilated the nationality of the Hebrews, and with it perished whatever kinds of servitude he had authorized among them.

The *sin* of American slavery is that of robbing men of their rights, reducing them to the condition of chattels, and using their persons as property, without the authority of God, and in open violation of the relations he has established, and of the principles of his moral government among men. And the American people will have a thousand reasons to be thankful to a merciful Providence if this *sin*, like that of the Hebrews, does not prove to them a "snare, and a trap, and a scourge, and thorns in their eyes," and stain this land at last with human blood. Fine logic this. God commissioned the Hebrews to destroy the devoted Canaanites, who

had filled to the utmost the cup of their national crimes, and to take possession of their land and country; therefore, Americans are authorized to go to Africa and kidnap all the natives they can, and bring them into this country, and chain them in perpetual slavery; or if they do not go themselves they are authorized to purchase the slaves from those who do go, and, by robbery and theft, procure them from Africa! Intelligent men, who are not blinded by interest or prejudice, must believe either that slavery does not admit of a fair, honorable, and logical defense, or that you are a very injudicious or incompetent advocate; for, if the system was capable of sensibility at all, it might well blush at many specimens of its defense as found in your book.

As I shall soon address you again, I close this letter as ever your friend,

J. H. P.

## LETTER XI.

## EMANCIPATION AND EDUCATION DOCTRINES OF SLAVERY EXPOSED.

“Emancipation doctrines discussed”—Emancipation in every form opposed—The domestic element in the system of slavery the agent in civilizing the slaves—Under this domestic element they were uncivilized two centuries ago, and they are yet uncivilized—How long will it take to civilize them under the same system?—“Teaching the slaves to read and write”—The education of the slaves is incompatible with the “vigorous operation of the principle of slavery”—The slaves must not be taught to read—The means employed to strengthen and perpetuate slavery may in the end destroy it.

REV. W. A. SMITH, D. D.,—As your last five lectures are all based on the assumption that you had established the philosophical and divine origin and character of absolute slavery in all its property and chattel forms, and as I have shown the utter fallacy of your whole foundation in this respect, I might pass them with but little notice without detracting from the merits of this investigation. However, that you may be satisfied I appreciate your learned labors on this question, having noticed two of them, I will give due attention to the other three. Your tenth, the one now to be considered, is, “EMANCIPATION DOCTRINES DISCUSSED.”

Having dismissed at once, as deserving no attention whatever, the subject of immediate emancipation, you direct your strength against all systems of gradual or progressive emancipation of American slaves; but your objections to emancipation are as impotent as your arguments for perpetual bondage; and neither is worthy the character and calling of a minister of Jesus Christ. In your theory you are swift to implicate divine Providence in the origin and principles of slavery; but after you get the system into operation, you discuss the subject as if no supreme Ruler of nations exists in the universe, whose ears are always attentive to the cry of the oppressed, and whose retributive justice is visited upon the oppressors. This is the more amazing, since the history of the past, with which I must presume you are not unacquainted, and especially that of the Bible, is little more than a record—directly and indirectly—of the righteous judgments of God visited upon governments and systems of oppression which have interposed their usurped powers to degrade and to prevent man from rising to that intellectual and moral elevation for which he was created, and in which alone he can serve God according to the design of his creation. Such practical skepticism is inexcusable in any man claiming to be a Christian.

But your position on emancipation is wholly de-

fective when viewed from another point. You treat the question as a matter of mere expediency, and as if the moral justice of the system in the premises had been either proved or conceded, neither of which has been done. You have totally failed to prove it; and so far from conceding it, I have demonstrated morally the contrary. While, therefore, moral justice demands their emancipation, all you have said on the question of mere expediency is a mere "waste of eloquence upon the desert air!" As to the results you suppose, should the border slaveholding states pass emancipation laws—"that they would be anticipated and the slaves sold to the more southern states, and in that case such laws would not secure the freedom of the slaves; or, if they did, it would increase the number of free colored persons in the south, and that would lead to their early, inevitable, and indiscriminate extermination"—they have no weight whatever against facts and the claims of justice. *They give mere expediency the supremacy over moral right and justice.*

It is impossible that the enslavement of millions of human beings, subjecting their persons to all the relations and accidents of property, can, in the eyes of justice, be a matter of *indifference*. It must be either morally just and right, or morally wrong. It can not be both, nor can it be neither.



Common-sense, humanity, justice, and the word of God pronounce it to be *wrong*; hence, mere expediency and every thing else that would hinder must stand aside, and the wrong be removed from the injured with the least possible delay. If the cupidity and love of slavery in the south are so much stronger than the dictates of common-sense, conscience, and justice as to prompt them to buy up and accumulate slaves in the "most southern states," under the operation of such emancipation laws, God will not work miracles to save them from the consequences. If, with their eyes open, they will rush into the sea after the slaves, regardless of the suspended walls of water on either hand, they may expect to be overwhelmed in the returning, resistless, and retributive waves! Not a few will be more than surprised at what must be considered your great indiscretion, not to say *blind fanaticism*, in your almost boastful threats that emancipation would lead "inevitably to the massacre" of no inconsiderable portion of the Africans in the south. "Blustering" threats from that source have become so familiar that they have lost their terrors; and now, when heard, it is not always easy to determine whether the disgust is greatest at its authors, or at ourselves for having been frightened so long at such harmless thunder. As you have been so indiscreet as to bring this

view of the subject before the public, I can assure you, with the utmost confidence, the south will never "*massacre*" either the free or slave population of the southern states. Others, besides a comparative handful of slave-owners, will be concerned in an enterprise of that kind should such a chastisement ever come upon this nation. In any such calamity the danger will be in the other direction. The repeated and grossly-offensive comparisons of the intelligent, honorable, and virtuous laboring classes in the free states, with the ignorant, degraded slaves of the south—made such by the system of slavery—have planted deeply in the bosoms of millions of free men the most profound abhorrence of the whole system of slavery—a system which not only holds millions of the race in ignorance and hopeless bondage, but depreciates the virtues, and insults the dignity of all those who are not either in its advocacy or its chains, and that seeks to degrade them to a level with its already helpless victims. And unless the whole character of human nature should be changed, and the entire laws of humanity and sympathy reversed, should such an "exterminating massacre" be attempted, both the sympathies and the assistance of those insulted millions would be with the oppressed and in stern opposition to the oppressors. I much regret, sir, that you should be even profuse

in reiterating those provoking comparisons. You say, "I have no hesitation in affirming that, in by far the greater number of instances, the condition of southern families, embracing domestic slaves, is much better—that is, both whites and blacks—than that of the larger number of northern families, with hired domestics, on large farms." (Page 220.) "The practical working of the system"—perpetual slavery, where the slaves are recognized and treated as property—"secures to the Africans a higher degree of essential happiness than is found to exist with the whites who fill menial offices of society in the free states." (Page 222.) "I repeat, the difference is very great between the menials [laborers] of families in the free and in the slave states, *and the difference is greatly in favor of the slave of the south.*" (Page 224.) These are specimens; and while they will render effective aid in kindling in the hearts of freemen that righteous indignation against the system that can insult and slander them—that will never slumber till our country is redeemed from its curse—they also demonstrate that your want of correct knowledge of the state of society in the free states is at least equal to the ignorance you charge upon the people of those states in regard to the condition of the slaves and the operations of the slavery system in the south. Every man of intelligence

knows your statements are incorrect, and that you either did not know, or, if you did, you have misrepresented the *facts*. In either case, you sacrifice public confidence for your love of slavery.

Even the superficial observer can not fail to see your confusion and embarrassment in defending absolute perpetual slavery, opposing every form of emancipation, and professing to plead for the civilization of the slaves. If you had not voluntarily embarked in this humiliating business I should have some sympathy to see you fly in such suspense from one horn of the dilemma to the other, and unable to escape from either. If you admit that the system has no power to civilize its victims, you increase the abhorrence and contempt of the civilized world against slavery. If you allow it any efficient civilizing power, such civilization will *soon compel* emancipation—the dilemma is absolute, and escape impossible!

You plead for civilization and defend perpetual slavery; but slavery is *inherently* and *incurably* opposed to civilization, and civilization is equally opposed to slavery. There is no alternative but to abandon slavery, or abandon the slaves to barbarism. What can be done for you, Doctor? Ah! you have made a discovery, and it is fully worth the cause! “Any old man”—thanks to good luck for an “old man” in such a time of need—

“among us is prepared to speak of the great improvement of the slaves within thirty or forty years past. *The domestic element of the system* has accomplished this improvement, and will certainly, in process of time, greatly elevate the race above what it now is.” (Page 216.) How long, Doctor, before they will be civilized by this domestic process? According to your own repeated statement the slaves are in a “*barbarous*” and “*uncivilized*” state, and this is one of your strongest pleas for holding them as property.

Now I submit to you a problem, the solution of which will not require very high attainments in mathematics—it can be solved by the “single rule of three;” namely, If the “domestic element” in the system of American slavery civilization has been in operation for six generations, or two centuries, and its subjects—the slaves—were uncivilized barbarians at the commencement, and now, in the seventh generation, they are still such, how many centuries or generations under the same system will it require fully to civilize and prepare them for the rights and privileges of freemen? I fear, Doctor, that your bungling attempt to retreat from your difficulties, by the aid of an “old man,” will be considered more ignoble than to have stood your ground and met an honorable defeat. For, as will be seen directly, you have strangely enough



adduced counter testimony to show that the "old man" is an incompetent witness—you say, "I find but few, even among intelligent and practical men, who, before their attention is particularly called to it," have made any such discovery as the "old man" speaks of. Your "domestic element of civilization" is a ludicrous farce. Every one acquainted with the facts knows that the great mass of the slaves do not spend an average of an hour in a month in the society of the whites; and when they are in their presence it is not to take lessons in civilization, but, frequently, to be scolded, kicked, cursed, or flogged, and driven off to their toils with a severity against which Christian civilization enters an eternal protest. But it is in open hostility to the order of God. When, or where did he ever authorize men in the work of Christian civilization to withhold the Bible, shut out all knowledge of letters and science, and to exclude their subjects from intercourse with civilized society? to reduce them to abject poverty and absolute slavery, and to deny them even the oral teachings of the Gospel, except by a ministry bound to defend such a system of civilization and slavery? The idea is preposterous in the extreme—a gross indignity offered to God—first to reduce his intelligent creatures to the legal condition of chattels, then thrust aside the very



means, even to his own law, which he has appointed to enlighten the mind, elevate the condition, and renew the heart, and then to affect to substitute the "*domestic element*" for God's means; while, in not a few instances, this very "domestic element" would be greatly improved by a civilizing process under the means God has appointed.

It is but another instance, however, of the *anti-christian* character of the system in virtually claiming, with the Papacy of Rome, to sit in the seat of God, and to usurp his authority and claim his power! One remark more on this lecture. I am entirely at a loss to understand you when you invite all "who have sympathy" for the slaves, to come to the south and preach "a pure Gospel" to them, when it is a notorious fact that not a few have been mobbed and driven out of the country, and some have been murdered, for preaching the same pure Gospel to the slave and master, which Jesus Christ commanded to be preached to "all nations—to every creature." I will not charge you with dissembling, but will leave you to explain, or others to comprehend you, while I turn to an examination of your eleventh lecture: On "TEACHING THE SLAVES TO READ AND WRITE." As this is the first formal specimen of southern literature that had fallen into my hands, on this grave, practical question, constituting an important part

of a reputed discussion of the whole subject of involuntary, perpetual slavery, and coming from one of your acknowledged abilities and notorious zeal for the system, and believing that if any light could be thrown on the subject of withholding an education from the slaves, even to the ability to read the Bible, you were the one to do it—I turned to this lecture with no common interest, and read it with the utmost care and attention. Imagine my surprise and disappointment to find that all you have said directly on the subject might be contained in forty lines, while the balance of the lecture, of nearly thirty pages, is taken up with what you have repeated, till it has become so stale that it requires almost more than Christian patience to read it—the “imbecility of the slaves,” their “ignorance and degradation,” their “uncivilized and barbarous, or semi-barbarous state,” their unfitness for “political sovereignty,” their “subordinate” condition, the necessity of the “domestic despotism,” they must be “kept under the vigorous operation of the principle of slavery,” and so on to the end of the marvelous chapter!

But, Doctor, I do not intend by these general remarks to deprive you of the benefit of your argument, for such no doubt you intended it to be, though you have not given it in syllogistic form. This omission was not, however, from want of

ability, but most likely, with all your love of human bondage, from a lack of moral courage to present without a covering the inherent hostility of slavery to the institutions of God. The foundation of all this you have given in few words—*“The principle of slavery must, of course, be kept in vigorous operation, and the means of improvement be wisely adapted to the state of the pupil”*—the slave. (Page 230.) The argument in form is—Any system of “improvement” for the slave that would hinder or interfere with the “vigorous operations” of perpetual absolute slavery must be unconditionally rejected. But a system of school education, or any other system that would teach the slave a knowledge of *letters*, however limited, would interrupt the “vigorous operation” of slavery; therefore, all school education, and every thing that would teach a knowledge of letters, must be forever rejected by the slave system. The reasons are obvious, for “*the means of improvement must be wisely adapted to the state of the pupil.*”

But “the state of the pupil,” though a human being redeemed and destined for eternal bliss or woe, is that of a “chattel in the hands of his owner,” and his person—soul and body—subjected to all the accidents and relations to law of property. And if the “pupil”—the slave—was allowed the knowledge of letters, even the elementary

principles of a practical school education, the light of history would reveal to him the desolations of the demon of despotism. The Bible would teach him that he is a *man* instead of a "*chattel*;" and the facts would shine upon his enlightened mind, from a thousand sources, that he had been robbed of his rights, and made the victim of an ungodly oppression. There is no mistake, Doctor, such knowledge would not only seriously interrupt "the vigorous operations" of slavery, but, at no remote period, consign the whole system to an unwept grave of infamy, which it has long since merited. Your conclusion, therefore, that education and slavery are inherently opposed to each other, and can not exist together, is unquestionably legitimate! However, I must remind you, that although you are *logically* correct on the question, you are *morally* in hostility to the means which God has appointed and approved for the civilization, elevation, and salvation of mankind. In the morally-sublime movements of Protestant Christendom of the present day—resting on a firmer basis, and prosecuted on a broader scale than at any other period in the history of the race—for the civilization and redemption of the nations of the earth, is the Bible, the press, the school, the knowledge of letters, and the light of literature and science excluded with more care than the "board of

health" would guard against the cholera or yellow fever? Just the reverse.

Christianity, to which God imperatively requires every other system to bow with reverence, goes to the barbarous and uncivilized with an open Bible, the Sabbath school, an uncensored press, the school, the college, elementary books, and the whole literature of Christianity and civilization, and a ministry with "clean hands and a pure heart," who have no depraved system of perpetual slavery to *defend* as the condition of being tolerated, or admitted to the social circles of a pro-slavery aristocracy, and caressed for their services. These are the means and measures of Divine appointment, and by which schools have been established and the Bible read on every continent upon the globe, but which you have promptly repudiated as it regards the millions of slaves in the south, and all for the grave reason they would disturb and hinder the "vigorous operation of the principle of slavery"—that is, they would soon destroy the relations of master *as legal owner* and slave *as passive property!* He who would exclude the reading of the Bible and religious literature from the work of Christian civilization, would be more fit for an inmate of the mad-house than for a missionary of the Gospel of the Son of God. If there was no other evidence of the ungodliness of the



system of slavery than the logical consequences into which it compels a man of your intelligence and talents, that alone is sufficient to "convict it of felony."

Permit me, dear Doctor, in the use of a southern term, to "*warn*" you, and pro-slaveryism in general, that though you may rear your walls to the stars, erect your prisons, forge your chains, organize your pro-slavery police, and bathe the "driver's" lash in human gore, to shut out the light from the African mind in America; but, as neither the righteousness nor the wrath of man can stay the clouds in their course or arrest their descending showers, so light from a thousand sources is penetrating the great mass of immortal mind, which has been chained in the ignorance of slavery for generations past. And as, in the case of other despotisms, the means they employed to increase and perpetuate their power have proved their ruin—the barbarous edict of a Pharaoh, under divine Providence, raised up a Moses to lead the millions of his brethren from bondage, amid the judgments of Heaven which consumed their oppressors—so the despotism of American slavery is not without indications of a similar infatuation. The Fugitive-Slave law—a disgrace to the statute-books of any civilized nation—was intended to throw another chain around the en-



slaved, and to increase, extend, and perpetuate the power of the system. But the omens of evil from this very source are not a few.

Every slave reclaimed under this odious law carries back with him to bondage enough of the "virus" of freedom—for freedom is a *deadly poison* to slavery—to "inoculate" a thousand slaves; these will impart it to others, and, as the policy is to send those reclaimed runaways to the extreme south to prevent the repetition of the sin of seeking freedom, it will not require a protracted period to "leaven the whole lump" with the idea of freedom, however crude and erroneous. Also the more recent attempt to prostitute the general government for its support, and to extend its area by mobocracy and a process of violence, bloodshed, and barbarism, at which humanity shudders, with the still later efforts to reopen the horrible African slave-trade—all these are tending to the same point of drying up the sympathies of humanity for the system, and of developing, concentrating, and organizing the *moral power* of Protestant Christendom and the civilized world against the "*abomination which maketh desolate*"—AMERICAN SLAVERY! Allow me again to "warn" all concerned that the south must consent, not only not to extend the area of slavery, but also to its removal, by the wisdom, means, and piety of this nation, or God

will overthrow it by the retributive power of his judgments, if the nation also falls with it. The very ignorance in which you propose to keep the slaves may, in the end, lead to a most fearful national chastisement, if not ruin; and should such a calamity come upon us from that source, none can provoke it except the south, and none will suffer as must the south.

It would have been better policy in you to have passed "Mrs. Harriet Stowe" without notice. The lion rarely ever writhes if he has not received a dart. However, I have never read her works—have merely glanced at them—and have no sympathy with that manner of treating the subject. The question is pre-eminently one of potent facts, which are only deformed by any attempt to embellish them by fiction. You have very truthfully affirmed that the "domestic element of slavery," which you have substituted for the means God has appointed for Christian civilization, operates very slowly, and that "its effects are, for the most part, without observation." You have also, unintentionally no doubt, conceded an unquestionable fact, which is a standing refutation of your whole theory on this point; namely, "So unobserved is the influence of this *element*, that I find but few, even among intelligent and practical men, who, before their attention is particularly called to the

subject, are aware of what it has already effected.”  
(Page 246.)

And it required even your eloquence, “in numerous public addresses,” to turn their attention to it, and to convince them that there is any reality in the assumption; and the proof is yet wanting, that when their attention was “particularly” directed to the question by your eloquence and zeal, they did not see a phantom created by the interests they have in slavery, instead of a tangible fact. Be that as it may, the concession is ruinous to your creed. For here is a system of civilization which has been in operation more than two centuries, and under its administration six generations of human beings, numbering untold millions, have passed into eternity; and, according to your own showing, the approximation to Christian civilization, even in the very midst of a Christian country, and all the appliances of Christianity, is “so slow and unobserved that even intelligent and practical men can not see it till their attention is particularly called to the subject.”

To affirm that such a system is the one, and only one, the moral and intellectual wants of man, and especially the slave, demand, would be a gross offense against both truth and justice, and to maintain that it is the system God has ordained—to the exclusion of the reading of his

own word—for that end would be blasphemy against the whole Christian system and its author. However, you again become hopeful, Doctor, and see light in the future. The slaves are to become “educated” and to be “emancipated;” and, of course, without means or system of either education or emancipation, as you are decidedly opposed to both. The system of slavery is to be greatly “modified,” if not totally abolished, by “colonization” and “amalgamation!” “Many of those who remain will, no doubt, amalgamate with the whites, however it may be in violation of the laws of civilization.” (Page 253.) It may be supposed that the successful experiments which have been made, and that are still in progress on an enlarged scale, enable you to speak with confidence on the practicability of amalgamation. If there ever were doubts entertained on that subject, the hundreds and thousands of cases in the south of slaves, in which the African blood has nearly disappeared, and the Anglo-Saxon been developed, must “authoritatively settle that controversy.”

There is, however, a little drawback on this encouraging prospect. This amalgamation process, instead of civilizing and elevating the Africans, that their blood may flow in the veins of *freemen*, sinks the blood of the whites into the degradation

and barbarism of African slavery. Slavery is necessarily the antagonist of Christian civilization and of Christianity itself, and its legitimate tendency is to degrade, in the end, the slave and the enslaver. This "domestic element" gives the "patriarchal head" a fine opportunity to demonstrate, if he wishes to experiment, the practicability of amalgamation, and those well acquainted with the system of slavery need not be told that there are not wanting instances in which those "patriarchs" make merchandise of their offspring, and sell the "children of their own bowels" in the market, as they do their cotton, rice, and mules! Heaven holds the system responsible for all this inhumanity and moral corruption.

Yours as ever,

J. H. P.

## LETTER XII.

## FRATERNAL SPIRIT OF ROMANISM AND SLAVERY—DUTIES OF MASTERS TO SLAVES.

“The conservative influence of the African population on the south”—The south may be called upon to protect the liberties of the north—The north will never be called on to protect the south—The probabilities reversed—The analogy and sympathy between Romanism and American slavery—In the event of revolution—The case of foreign-born citizens and that of the slaves contrasted—“The duties of masters to their slaves”—Some good advice—Will not be likely to be observed—Incongruities—Absurdities.

REV. DR. W. A. SMITH,—It is not strange that men, contemplating the same subject from opposite points, should entertain conflicting views, and arrive at different conclusions as to final results; nor is it to be supposed that the subject of slavery is an exception to this general fact. Your twelfth lecture, “THE CONSERVATIVE INFLUENCE OF THE AFRICAN POPULATION ON THE SOUTH,” is a striking example of the kind. Ignoring the admonitory record of history, the intellectual and moral constitution of man, and the sleepless demands of justice, and apparently blind to every thing that does not patronize and support absolute slavery, you gravely read us the following strange homily: “It may be



demonstrated that, without a singular interposition of divine Providence, the south—using the term, as I generally do, for all those states which maintain the system of domestic slavery—will, ere long, be called upon to protect the liberties of the north from the progress of agrarianism, while there is not the remotest probability that these will ever be called on to protect the south from the insurrectionary movements of the blacks.” (Page 258.) This is a bold and boastful thrusting of a most delicate and exciting question before the public, which you may yet have reason to regret having done, and which nothing less than a conviction of duty to resist the aggressions, presumptions, and usurpations of slavery could induce me to discuss at this time. But if slavery and its advocates will peril its existence and the peace of the country by their unwarrantable pretensions, they must take the consequences.

Now, sir, without intending to disparage your judgment in the case, there are millions of men in this republic much better qualified to judge in this matter than you are, because they have no prejudice of education, sectional jealousies, pride of opinion, or interest in the system to bias their judgments in regard to the true character and position of slavery. Besides, they are better acquainted with the moral character of society and

the state of public feeling in the north than you are, and are as well informed as you as to the general views of the south, who believe that, instead of "domestic slavery" being the great "conservative principle" that is to "protect the north and save the nation, it is the exhaustless source of national strife, jealousy, alienation of confidence, sectional enmity, political corruption and disunion, and a standing curse to the whole country; and that there is no element, principle, or institution in being which so potently threatens the stability and perpetuity of our government and institutions of liberty as the system of American slavery. And, if we look at these opposite opinions in the light of *facts*, the latter is sustained by the whole history of our country; while, in the same light, your exorbitant claims for slavery approximate the hallucinations of a madman!

Although you have quite exceeded yourself in eloquence in this lecture, you have given another proof that you either have an exceedingly bad cause, or that you are a very injudicious advocate in referring to Romanism in defense of the system of slavery. I am not insensible to the fact of the great accumulation of foreigners in our country, nor of the possible peril to our free and Protestant institutions from their moral character, and especially that portion of them who are under the

influence of Romanism, and are controlled by an unprincipled and despotic priesthood. This subject has engaged my attention for years, and the progress of events has by no means diminished my apprehensions of evil from that source in the end.

But how did you overlook the fact, Doctor, that in your eloquent description of the possible, not to say probable, evils and dangers of Romanism, you were exhibiting, as to all practical purposes, the *counterpart* of the system of American slavery? In painting, in glowing colors, the portrait of the "*man of sin*"—Romanism—in its threatening aspects, you have, inadvertently, drawn in no less lively colors the picture of what may be called pre-eminently the "*sin of man*"—American slavery, with its kindred results, of far more than possible evil! A mere sketch of the analogy is all that is necessary to identify their common paternity and intimate brotherhood.

1. No fact is more legible in the records of history, than that Romanism originated in the lust of power in the few authoritatively to control the *many* for the sole pleasure and profit of the former. Slavery has the same, and *absolutely no other origin or existence*.

2. Romanism has been reared to its present maturity by the patronage and untiring vigilance of

an interested priesthood. Slavery has reached its present magnitude by similar means. Hence your wrath and harmless ravings against the ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the principles of Jefferson, for having "unsettled the faith of multitudes in the south," on the subject of slavery, and for having well-nigh razed the system from its foundation. And, doubtless, but for the patronage and support of other ministers, and "the great apostasy" of the ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the south from primitive Methodism and the purity of the Gospel, on this subject, the cry of a slave under the gory lash of a heartless driver would not be heard this day in our land.

3. Romanism is sustained by a "*politico-religious* priesthood." "Louis Napoleon exercises despotic sway over a large portion of as free a people, in their opinions and sentiments on all subjects without the range of priestly dictation and dogmatism, as can be found on the globe;" . . . "he needed the authority of the priesthood to enforce the politico-religious dogmas upon which alone his despotic throne could repose with safety!" . . . "and this is only an instance in which the genius of liberty is crushed and trodden under foot by the 'man of sin.'" (Page 267.) The main facts in this case, when applied to

slavery, are true almost to the letter. "Slavery"—a comparative few men—"exercises despotic sway over a large portion of as free a people in their opinion—without the range of the dictation"—absolute control of their owners—"as can be found on the globe." "And this is only an instance in which the genius of liberty is crushed and trodden under foot by the 'sin of man'"—American slavery. You are doubtless correct in supposing that the despotism of Napoleon is sustained by the Roman priesthood of France, and it is equally true that the despotism of slavery is supported by the Protestant priesthood, or ministry of America in the south.

4. Romanism teaches "that it is a sin, involving the damnation of the soul, to read God's word, or to exercise private judgment upon any matters which such a priesthood may choose to affirm are taught therein." (Page 266.) No tears can ever atone for the sin, or restitution repair the injury, or penitence obliterate the crime of Romanism for withholding the Bible from its ignorant and degraded victims. But this is precisely one of the execrable sins of slavery, withholding the word of God and shutting up the millions of its victims in moral and spiritual darkness.

5. Romanism claims to supply the place of the *infallible* word of God by the offices and teaching



of her priesthood. Slavery has committed the same offense by excluding the light of letters, and sealing the word of life from the minds of the millions of its human chattels. Both are chargeable with the sin of thrusting aside the *infallible teachings of God's word*, and of substituting a *fallible* worm of earth in the person of a Roman priest or Protestant minister, as the chief medium of communication between immortal spirits and the great Jehovah! And they are both chargeable with the same falsehood in professing to believe that the Bible teaches their dogmas; and with the absurdity of refusing to allow those most interested—their enslaved victims—light and knowledge enough to read the record for themselves, and there learn to submit with patience to the oppressions of their divinely-appointed oppressors!

6. The fact is as notorious as the existence of Romanism, that it is sternly opposed to popular education. The perpetuity of its being depends on the ignorance of its subjects. The light of a sound, popular education, penetrating and elevating the minds of the masses, would banish it from the earth. Your learned lecture, already reviewed, against educating the slaves, is proof in point of the fraternal relations and common sympathies of the two systems on that subject.

7. Romanism has always sought to secure its



object—the absolute control of its subjects—by subjecting the civil power to its dictation; and when it failed in that, or the civil power was too tardy for its purposes, it resorted to the violence of mobocracy. Slavery in this is its exact counterpart. History has already recorded the facts to be read in all the future, that since the “great southern apostasy,” and the despotic attempt to expel the Methodist Episcopal Church from the slaveholding states, when the forms of law would not serve the purpose, unoffending citizens and pious ministers have been mobbed, in the face of law and justice, for no other crime than that of not defending slavery; and the mobocrats knew they had the countenance and sympathies of those who professed to be the saints of God; and not a few of those deeds of violence and blood would be fully worthy the *diabolical inquisition of Rome!* And to-day it is doubtful which would be martyred first, the faithful minister of Christ who would go into the metropolis of the “mother of harlots” and teach the slaves of “his holiness” to read the Bible and to preach to them “the truth as it is in Jesus,” or the minister who would do the same thing to the slaves in the south.

8. Although in some things there is a partial difference in the mode of operation between Romanism and slavery, there is a perfect agreement

as to the principle. The former seeks its object by controlling the body through the darkness and ignorance of the mind and conscience; the latter, in controlling the mind and conscience to uncomplaining submission, by enslaving the body, so that the result in both cases is the enslavement of the whole man, soul and body, to a heartless despotism.

9. Romanism is the sworn enemy of a free press. Its whole history is a record of this fact. Conscious that its deep corruption and its odious claims to power could not bear the developments of truth, or the scrutiny of free discussion, its energies have ever been directed to conceal the one and to suppress and crush out the other. The record of Rome, in this respect, is but the history of the system of slavery in this country. It has mobbed presses, indicted religious newspapers as "nuisances," and driven honorable men from their lawful business for the crime of having on sale a few books of an antislavery character; and at this hour a man would attempt to establish a free press in the south, to discuss the question of slavery, at the peril of his life.

10. Romanism has exerted its powers steadily to prostitute the civil governments to its purposes of corruption and despotism. It has threatened and dethroned rulers, absolved subjects from their

allegiance to rightful governments, fomented discontent, excited revolutions, and spread the desolations of war over whole kingdoms.

The system of American slavery has given unmistakable evidence of the same spirit. Its almost superhuman struggles for control in the national councils and legislation; its success in the enactment of the "Fugitive-Slave law," by which every freeman may be required, by an irresponsible, petty upstart of a marshal, to become "a slave-catcher," and the army and navy of the nation are rendered tributary to its power to enforce its claims! And wherever its exorbitant demands are not conceded, and its imperious dictations obeyed, it thunders from its throne—its American "VATICAN"—*dissolution!* DISSOLUTION OF THE UNION!! Not to name others, these facts, with the "Dred Scott" decision of a Roman Catholic, a Jesuit judge, demonstrate the common sympathy and brotherhood of the two systems of Romanism and American slavery. There are other points of agreement not less striking; but, keeping this fearful similarity of the systems in view, I pass to notice the possible results to this republic. It is a fact of universal notoriety, that these are the two great disturbing elements of the tranquility of this nation. Slavery is patent, and lies mainly on the surface, in all its repulsive deformity,

boldly asserting its claims, and urging its way to universal patronage. Romanism is latent, and is laying its plans, and endeavoring to effect its object, as far as may be, unobserved by the public eye, till it can reach a position, political and otherwise, from which it can make its power be felt, and boldly and publicly assert its claims to national patronage. Every well-informed friend of freedom in the land feels an abiding and growing conviction that both of those despotisms are alike antagonistic to enlightened liberty, just government, and free Protestant institutions. The indications are too clear to be mistaken that the issue is already joined, and unless it is withdrawn, or the positions changed, the conflict, which will either bury those despotisms or freedom in this country, is inevitable.

Will the friends of humanity and justice abandon their claim for the "inalienable right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" for every man in this land? If they do, or fail to prosecute it in the name and fear of God, and in the face of all the consequences that Providence may permit to attend it, they will not only extinguish the rising hope of the oppressed millions of mankind, but merit the unmitigated execrations of the race, if not the retributive curse of Heaven. Will they do it? No, never, while the earth moves, and while the sun shines in the heavens! Will those

despotisms withdraw their preposterous claims to enslave, degrade, and ruin immortal beings, and will they allow this republic to repose in peace and to advance in prosperity? The indications are any thing but flattering, and especially in regard to slavery. The object of its infatuated advocates is to extend its area, till slavery becomes national and freedom sectional. If it persists in this, nothing but a miracle from Heaven can prevent collision, bloodshed, and civil war. What are the chances for the issue to be changed? This question is not without some light in most of its aspects except that of slavery.

1. God has planted in the constitution of man an inextinguishable *desire* for liberty, the possession and use of property, and the *love* of local habitation—the love of home. Every man desires to be lord of himself—as far as human institutions are concerned—his home and his means, however rude or limited. This is seen in the history of the race, and in every condition of life, from the love of possession and use of the rude bow and arrow of the untutored children of the forest, to the millions of a Rothschild and the crown and dignity of a throne. The existence and development of this principle, under the means Providence has appointed, constitute the foundation of Christian civilization, the elevation of humanity, and the



stability and perpetuity of human society and government. 2. The genius of our civil government and Christian institutions allows the largest liberty and widest range for the exercise and practical application of this principle. 3. The more intelligent part of the foreign population in this country, not excepting the Roman Catholic element, are every day learning the importance of those facts, and are availing themselves of their advantages by procuring the right of soil, becoming freeholders, establishing business, improving shops, farms, and family residences; and thus developing the principle of the love of possession, home, and locality. 4. They are also learning that these rights and privileges of freemen can not be enjoyed in peace and safety without just and equal laws and government; and that these can not be secured and sustained in a republic like ours without intelligence and virtue in the masses of the people. 5. That in any violent revolutions they must inevitably be the greatest sufferers; hence, the law of their nature—self-preservation—the love of home, reverence for the dust of departed parents, dear companions, and loved children already buried about their habitations—all bind them to the soil as their permanent home and that of their children, and *identify their highest interests with the national peace and prosperity.*



With these facts before us, the conclusion is reasonable, and is sustained by the testimony of history, that, in the event of civil commotion, all these principles and interests would nerve them with their benefactors to repel, at the peril of their lives, a usurping or invading enemy.

This reasonable result can only be prevented by the supreme depravity of demagogues under the guise of statesmen, and friends of the people, tampering with the foreign element in the body-politic for selfish and corrupt purposes. And even that can not occur but by the unpardonable negligence of the friends of freedom to diffuse the light of a sound education among the masses of the people. I now turn to the case of the slaves. In view of a possible violent collision of despotism and liberty in this country, you congratulate the south on account of its safety through the means of slavery! "The conservative influence, therefore, of the African race—the slaves—in the southern states, I set down as a *fixed fact*, for which, in the prospective condition of the country, we have abundant cause to be devoutly thankful to almighty God."

And then, sir, as if, in the midst of your devotions, your eloquence had caught fire and dashed off as an unmanageable steed, leaving truth and your Christian charity out of sight in the chase,

you overwhelm us with—"How madly do they reason who, by a cordon of free-soil states, on the west and south, would shut up the southern states—as if, with bolts and bars, they would cage a savage beast! False philosophers! Enemies alike to justice and humanity! Worse than Nadab and Abihu, in the republic of Moses! Kindred to Ahitophel and Judas, and, in later days, to Benedict Arnold!" (Page 274.) Finding to our great delight, as a "*fixed fact*," that we actually do survive the shock of this terrible avalanche, and with a little time to tranquilize our startled nerves, and passing by the late and interesting *discovery* of "the republic of Moses!" we resume the question of the "conservative influence of slavery."

And, 1. The slaves have the same natural constitution common to man—the desire for liberty, the love of home, and the possession and use of means for their comfort and happiness; but the slave system positively and perpetually prohibits all these to the slaves. Hence, 2. As they can not own any thing on earth, and are themselves owned as chattel property, they have no home to love, or interests in the soil to defend, under the system of slavery; even the dust of their dead is scattered, as by the hands of desolation, over the whole surface of the slaveholding states. True,

they have some local attachments from habit, but not from interest; and the little "patches" they are allowed for their own use to cultivate, mostly *on Sunday*, when they should be worshiping their Maker, is the veriest mockery of justice, morality, and God. 3. With no right of soil, home, fire-side, family or any other personal interest, belonging to their condition as slaves, to defend, their case forms a perfect contrast to that of the victims of the element of despotism among the foreign population in this country. In the latter, the most potent circumstances tend steadily to identify their own highest interests with the peace and prosperity of the nation, and to nerve them in the hour of peril in defense of the national interests, as the only means of securing their own personal rights and privileges. In the former case—that of the slaves—the most powerful circumstances operate directly the reverse. They feel as far as they have light—and it is increasing every day—to know the facts, that they have no interests in a government and institutions which have worn out in the degradations of slavery, and buried, but one remove from barbarism, six generations of their ancestors, and that are performing the same operation on them, and that have doomed their unborn posterity to the same infamy. And, with what light they have, they know perfectly

that no revolution in this or any other government can really make their condition worse than it now is. They are absolute slaves now and their children after them, and it can be no worse in any event, and if revolution produced change at all it must be for their benefit. And, now, suppose the crisis had arrived, which you have presumed more than possible, and the population of the free states were arrayed in the strife of arms, and, as you have kindly proposed, the south by her arms should assume the arbitership and the protectorate of freedom in the north, who would constitute your forces?

Would you send an army of slaves to quell the rebels? You would as soon think of reposing peacefully amid the terrors of an earthquake! Would you call out the strength of the free white population, and leave your aged and infirm, your wives and children in the midst of millions of ignorant and excited slaves? For you might as well attempt to chain the waves of the sea as to preserve the south—slaves and all—from excitement at such a crisis. And you need not be told that in such a conflict there would not be wanting men, in your own midst, to kindle the fires of revolt and insurrection, and to fill the minds of the ignorant slaves with the intoxicating idea of changing positions with their owners, till their infatu-

ation and fury would become resistless and the desolations irreparable! There is no portion of the people of this whole land whose position would be so perilous, or who would be more helpless than the slaveholding south, if such a day should ever come, which may Heaven in mercy forbid! Who knows better than yourself that the whispers of an insurrectionary movement among the slaves can, in forty-eight hours, wrap the south in the horrors of a panic, which, though felt, can never be described? And yet, sir, so great is your infatuation that you boastingly assert that slavery is the "conservative element" which is to protect the free states, and to save the republic, and then insult the intelligence of the country by charging those who differ from you with crime and treason, even "worse than Nadab, Abihu, Ahitophel, Judas, and Benedict Arnold!!" If that ever-to-be-deprecated day should come, what many will call "your insolence to freemen" will have its full share in provoking it. The intense absurdity of such vain boasting is too transparent to command respect. The infatuation may be pitied, but the presumption can scarcely be pardoned.

I turn now to your thirteenth and last lecture: "THE DUTIES OF MASTERS TO THEIR SLAVES." As it contains nothing particular as to the *moral character* of the system, I will only notice it so far as to



show the power of slavery to involve a great man, when he attempts to defend it, in humiliating inconsistencies. I award to you, however, the credit of more method in this than all your other lectures. You divide the subject into, "1. The duty of masters to their slaves as their money; 2. As social beings; and, 3. As religious beings." This lecture is long, and contains some good advice; but it is doubtful whether it will be fully appreciated and observed by those to whom it is addressed. Indeed, as you have performed the work of defending the system to the best of your abilities—the matter the "masters" are most concerned about—and have made it a very godly and "patriarchal institution," and have received their thanks, you may think yourself favored if some of them do not laugh at, if not in their hearts despise, your pious and patriarchal admonitions. However, I will still hope your godly labors in that direction will have some good influence. According to the doctrines of this lecture "property, money," "social beings," and "religious beings" are convertible terms. The property and the social and religious beings are precisely one and the same thing—the slave—and the social and religious beings and the money are exactly the same—the *slave*. We may then, with entire propriety and logical exactness, talk of social and religious mo-



ney, and, of course, *money* that is both *social* and *religious*! This is not all. This “social and religious money should be subjected to only reasonable labor;” . . . should have “suitable tools and implements;” for “with sharp instruments, and those of the best kind, labor is no longer such drudgery” with this singular kind of “money.” Not to pursue the subject further in that direction, to say the least this is a marvelous kind of money!

But let us glance at this beautiful picture of pro-slaveryism from another point. As the substitution of “money” for “social and religious beings” is so harmonious and classical, it will be equally so to employ “social and religious beings” in those places in the Bible where it recognizes the use of “money.” Abraham said, “Entreat for me to Ephron, that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which is in the end of his field, for as much *money* [that is, ‘social and religious beings’] as it is worth.” Again, “Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and restore every man’s money [‘social and religious beings’] into his sack.” And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money—“social and religious beings—in his sack’s mouth!” That he might give no offense as to tribute, Jesus directed Peter—“Go thou to the sea, and cast a hook and take up the

fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth thou shalt find a piece of *money*, [‘social and religious beings:’] that [them] take and give unto them for me and thee,” as tribute money.

This is only a brief specimen of the incongruities which slavery can compel men—otherwise of good sense—to involve themselves in for attempting to support and defend the system. My regard for you personally, however, restrains me from giving a full-length portrait of this wonderful lecture; and as I have now passed through your lectures, and shown, beyond successful contradiction, that they commenced in *radical error*, and progressed in *confusion* and *contradiction*, and closed in *absurdities*, I dismiss your book, intending, however, soon to call your attention to another view of the “peculiar institution.”

Still remaining yours, as ever,

J. H. P.

## LETTER XIII.

## THE OLD TESTAMENT AND SLAVERY.

The system of American slavery examined in the light of the Old Testament Scriptures—Abraham and slavery—Slavery and the Decalogue—The Hebrew code and slavery—The twenty-fifth chapter of Leviticus and slavery—If slavery existed among the Hebrews with the Divine approbation, it was either a part of their institutions, or it was not—If the latter, slavery is not honest in quoting it as a part of their code—If the former, it was abolished by Divine authority with their whole system, and can afford no support to slavery.

REV. DR. W. A. SMITH,—Although I have rescued the Scriptures, as far as your lectures are concerned, from all suspicion of supporting slavery, yet, from the studied effort that has been and is still being made to bribe or torture the Bible to testify in its favor, I have reserved a more formal examination of the relation of American slavery to the Divine record for a separate place. I shall consider its relation first to the Old and then to the New Testament Scriptures.

*First.* As Abraham is supposed to have been a model slaveholder, and is the first case mentioned in the Old Testament, it claims attention as first in order. 1. It is of paramount importance to

keep in view the fact that unless the *text*, in its *legitimate connection*, absolutely requires that *servant* must mean a "*chattel in the hands of an owner*," it affords no kind of support to the system of "chattel slavery." 2. It is no less important to understand the whole character of Abraham, and the light in which he was viewed by the public in his day. There is not a particle of proof in the whole case that he was a slave-dealer, bartering in the markets for human beings as chattels or merchandise. The imputation, in any form, is but little less than a grossly-ignorant or wicked slander. On the contrary, he was every-where distinguished for his intelligence, wisdom, justice, benevolence, and piety, which, with the special favor of God on his faith, rendered his patronage and protection as a counselor and chief peculiarly desirable. Hence, instead of being recognized as a slave merchant, when he sought a burying-place for his deceased companion at "Hebron, in the land of Canaan, the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him, Hear us, my lord; thou art a mighty prince among us: [margin, *a prince of God*:] in the choice of our sepulchers bury thy dead." Gen. xxiii, 5, 6. With such a public reputation, and the state of society then existing, it was perfectly natural that not a few would identify their interests with his, and become subordinate

to his counsel and the authority of his leadership; and, according to the tenor of this subordinate relation to "*a mighty prince*," they were his servants.

3. With this view fully agrees the first account we have in the Bible of Abraham's servants. When he learned that predatory kings had captured and carried off Lot and his family, "Abraham armed his trained"—instructed and proved—"servants, born in his house"—the young men, as they are termed in the sequel, of those families attached to him for mutual security and benefit—"three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them," and retook the captives. Gen. xiv, 14. If these "servants"—"young men"—were absolute slaves, and their persons constituted the principal part of Abraham's "*chattel wealth*," and if they, or any part of them, might be sold in the slave-market the same day they returned to pay expenses, it might be, of this military excursion, how supremely absurd is the supposition that they would peril their own lives to rescue others from the same, or probably less, oppressive condition than that in which themselves were in, and then voluntarily return to their former degradation of *chattel slavery*! Where is the slave-dealer in all the land who would arm three or four hundred of his slaves even to defend his own house, cotton or rice-field, much less to pursue an enemy into a

foreign state, when a mere whisper, that the slaves are concealing fire-arms and deadly weapons, will throw the whole south into consternation? 4. It is worthy of special observation that no where are his servants referred to as constituting any part of the *riches* of Abraham, which could not be the case if they had been considered property—"chattels in his hands as their owner," as is literally the fact in the case of slaveholders. When his distinction for wealth is the subject, it is said, "Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold." Not the most remote intimation that servants—slaves—formed any part of his riches. When he is to be distinguished for both *riches* and *honor*, "the oldest servant of his house, that"—unlike a slave who himself is property—"ruled over all that he had," . . . "for all the goods of Abraham were in his hands," said, "I am Abraham's servant. And the Lord hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and camels, and asses." Gen. xxiv, 34, 35. He is *great* in *honor*, having many subordinates attached to his person, and voluntarily serving him for just compensation; and many attached to him as their counselor and ruler, from mutual interests: he is *great* in *riches*, of flocks, herds, silver, and gold.



This is the true character and position of Abraham, the "friend of God," elevated as high above that of a slave-breeder and a slave-monger as true dignity, piety, and justice are above villainy, cupidity, and cruelty. 5. In the light of these facts and legitimate conclusions, it will not be difficult to understand those incidents in his history relied on by pro-slaveryists in support of their system. He had servants bought with his money as well as those born in his house. "He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant." Gen. xvii, 13. This Scripture is quite formidable to the opposers of slavery, when interpreted by the operations of the slave markets of the south. It brings up the *great idea* of the whole machinery of southern slavery, with its slave-breeders, slave-speculators, slave-prisons, chains, handcuffs, drivers, and gory lashes, in glorious array to their patriarchal minds with the devout and venerable Abraham as the great exemplar! That some may be silly enough to suppose they have the example of this man of God in this ungodly business I will not deny; but that men of intelligence and honesty should set up any such claim is inexplicable on any other ground than that of the power of slavery to prostitute both intelligence and integ-

ity. When this case is considered in its connection with the divinely-approved character of Abraham, the design of God in raising him up as the father of his peculiar people, to whom he was, in the midst of the most terrible grandeur, to reveal his *moral law of universal obligation*, and also the character of that law, that it lays death—as will be seen presently—at the very foundation of slavery, injustice, and oppression of every kind, the idea of slavery in its *chattel* form vanishes as a polluted ghost, and leaves the facts in their undistorted form. It has been shown that “servants born in his house,” not only does not involve the element of chattel slavery, but, in its connection, necessarily excludes the idea; while being “bought with his money,” can mean nothing more than procuring services for just compensation, unless this solitary item is made to contradict the whole tenor of the history, the character of Abraham, the purposes of divine Providence, and the spirit and letter of the law of God. This view is confirmed by the fact that those “servants born in his house, and bought with his money,” were taken into visible covenant relation with God, and the seal of his “everlasting covenant was in their flesh” precisely as in the case of Abraham himself; they were protected by the same law, instructed in the same religion by the same means,

and allowed all the advantages of the education and literature of the times just as was their relative superior, all which facts demonstrate that, whatever might be the character of this servitude and subordination, it was in every essential point the direct opposite of American slavery, which denies its victims all these privileges, not excepting knowledge sufficient to read the Bible, and allows them no light even on matters pertaining to their eternal interests except through the lips of a priesthood subordinate to the pro-slavery power. The attempt to find a parallel between the case of Abraham and that of the southern slaveholders is preposterous in the extreme! and betrays a great want of either candor or knowledge. As his case is the most hopeful to sustain slavery previously to the giving of the law, and as that, upon examination, has proved an entire failure, I need not notice others of the same period which are less clear and of far less importance. I turn now to the constitution of God's moral government among men—the decalogue, or ten commandments.

*Second.* Hebrew servitude, or, in your misuse of terms, "Hebrew slavery." 1. As the tenth article of the decalogue prohibits the sin of coveting "thy neighbor's house," his "wife," or his "servant," the astonishing claim is set up, by the defenders of slavery, that it is of the same Divine origin, ex-

tent, and duration as the marriage relation, and the law of the ten commandments! and that, if slavery should cease, that part of the article relating to it would be void; but, as no part of the law can become a nullity, therefore slavery must be perpetual. 2. This argument wholly “begs the question” by assuming, not only without evidence or reason, but in the face of both, that “*servant*” in the text means a *slave*, in the sense, and *only in the sense* of A CHATTEL in the hands of an *absolute owner*. I have proved, and you have conceded, that the “term *servant*, as correctly translated from the original Scriptures, IS GENERIC,” and as such contains *species* under it, as the “servants” of a king—his subjects—“hired servants,” and “bond servants,” in none of which is there the shadow of the *right of property* in their *persons*, claimed by those they serve as their relative superiors; while this right of property in the person of the slave alone constitutes its *species*, and specific characteristic difference from all other *species* of human servitude and subordination. This fact demands the special attention of all who would understand the subject. Each *species* belonging to this *genus* is distinguished by the tenor of the relative subordination, the limitation of the time of service, the character of the service to be performed, or other conditions equally clear, all, how-

ever, *limiting the time, and absolutely excluding the right of property in the person of the subordinate*; but, in direct opposition to all other species, the very being of the *slavery species* consists in the UNLIMITED *time of service* and the ABSOLUTE RIGHT OF PROPERTY IN THE ENTIRE PERSON OF THE SLAVE. Hence this boasted argument, which is becoming a kind of "watchword" with divines in the south, is as destitute of dignity as of truth, for it virtually begs—"Pray, sir, do allow me, if you please, without questioning either its truth or justice, the benefit of this monstrous assumption, that *servant* in the tenth article of the decalogue means nothing more nor less than a slave, and that it always does mean a *slave*, in whose person—soul, body, and spirit—the owner has an absolute right of property in the strict chattel form; then, I can make out a pretty fair case for slavery with those whose ignorance or interest disqualifies them to judge; but if you deny me this assumption, which never can be proved, you not only deprive me of the chief support from holy Scripture, but go very far toward convicting me of ignorance or imposture!"

3. This commandment is worthy its divine Author, and promotive of the interests of the whole race, when rightly understood, as utterly excluding the doctrine of human chattels in the persons of slaves, and as applying to those in the various sub-



ordinate relations of human society so important to the interests of all concerned. In every department of society, servants or subordinates may be objects of covetousness, not because they are slaves or *chattel property*, but because they could be vastly useful to covetous and avaricious persons in a similar business relation. In this view, as matter of fact, the Divine prohibition has constant application even where slavery never existed, and where it is permanently excluded by positive enactments, and such will always be the fact till all men learn to fear God and love righteousness. Hence, to assume the necessity of perpetual, involuntary slavery in its chattel form, in order to perpetuate the application and authority of the Divine law, betrays an inconsistency, ignorance, or depravity which belongs alone to the defense of American slavery. 4. It is a plain rule of law and of common-sense, that to ascertain the true meaning of any document, such parts as are obscure *must be interpreted* by those that are plain and intelligible, provided such interpretation makes good sense and agrees with the main object of the instrument. This rule applies, in all its force, to the interpretation of holy Scripture. And it may be affirmed, with the utmost confidence, that the interpretation or application of any portion of Scripture that plainly contradicts either of the *ten*



commandments, or any interpretation or application of *one* of the commandments which contradicts or positively nullifies *another* of them, which is perfectly plain, is beyond all doubt radically false and ruinous to sound morals. This charge, without any extenuation whatever, lies against the interpretation, or rather perversion, of the tenth article of the law of God by slavery-defending divines. The moral principle of the fifth commandment, with its reciprocal obligations and duties, enters into the very foundation of human society, and is the source of those social and domestic attachments and sympathies essential to civilization, and without which Christianity can have no existence in its true character. "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee," and, as applied by Paul, "Honor thy father and mother, (which is the first commandment with promise,) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long in the earth," is a divine law of universal application and perpetual obligation, so clear and positive that no comment can make it plainer. To meet and comply with its obligations in any intelligible and acceptable form the *domestic relations*, as established by Divine authority, of husband and wife, parents and children, must be held absolutely sacred and be protected by all the

authority of civilized and Christian society. Without this protection, and where sexual intercourse is promiscuous, and where no child can know his paternal relations, and where every member of such promiscuous families, from the reputed father to the child of an hour old, is liable under the system of slave laws to be torn away and sold as a chattel—obedience to this Divine command is, to all intents and purposes, impossible. Hence, to interpret *servant*, in the tenth article of the decalogue, to mean *slave—chattel property*—ignores and outrages the domestic relations which God has ordained, and by an invincible necessity contradicts, nullifies, and renders forever void the fifth commandment as to all the millions of the enslaved! The same facts and conclusions apply with equal force to the provisions of the seventh commandment, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” The system of American slavery perfectly nullifies this article, and the protection of the relations of husband and wife, as God has appointed, would forever nullify the system of slavery. Therefore, as sure as the decalogue can not contradict itself, and one part nullify another, but is pure, just, and good, it not only positively repudiates slavery, but stands an eternal record and witness against the presumption and depravity of the whole system. 5. This pro-slavery interpretation is not only assuming, in-

consistent, and contradictory, but grossly absurd. It claims that unless servant, in the text, means slave, and slave means the absolute bondage of a human being as a chattel in the hands of an owner, the law must fail for want of an object on which to operate; hence the necessity for a system of slavery as perpetual as the obligations of the decalogue! The plain meaning of the text is a universal prohibition of the sin of covetousness, and has no more to do with sanctioning slavery than it has with authorizing horse-stealing or murder! Try it in another case; the divine Savior universally prohibited the sin of retaliation. It was said in his day, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." This command is as divine, authoritative, universal, and perpetual as the decalogue; and should the sins there specified ever cease, according to this interpretation, the command would be an utter nullity for want of objects to operate on. Therefore, precisely the same exposition that would make slavery a divine institution under the tenth article of the decalogue, would make spiteful treatment, hating, persecuting, and cursing the pious institutions of God, of universal and perpetual obligation!! I have now

shown clearly, first, that the provisions of the article in the decalogue can be fulfilled to the letter, to the absolute exclusion of the system of slavery. Secondly, that all the apparent support derived from this source is the bare assumption, in the face of facts to the contrary, that "servant," in the text, means an *absolute slave*, whose person is a chattel in the hands of his owner. Thirdly, if this were allowed it would contradict and nullify, beyond the power of reconciliation, the fifth and seventh commandments of the Divine law. Fourthly, that the same rule of explanation would make hating, persecuting, and cursing divine ordinances as perpetual as Christianity! As the decalogue is the constitution of God's moral government of man, emanating directly from himself, recognized and virtually re-enacted by the divine Savior; and as this moral constitution is of universal application and perpetual obligation, and most distinctly recognizes, *as of Divine appointment*, the domestic relations in all their sacredness, with their reciprocal obligations and duties; and as the protection of those relations and the performance of their duties *absolutely exclude* the idea of slavery from this Divine law—the legitimate conclusion, and, indeed, the only one the facts will allow, is, that God has no where made provision for or recognized *chattel slavery* with approbation; but,

on the contrary, has authoritatively excluded it from the universal organic law of his moral government, and that he only tolerates it as he does other enormous sins, till the time of retributive visitation and judgment. Having shown with a clearness equal to demonstration itself, that the moral law of the ten commandments either contradicts, nullifies, and destroys itself, or that slavery is wholly excluded from its provisions, and positively condemned as an impostor by its authority, I proceed to examine the subject of Hebrew servitude under this great moral charter.

*Third.* The conclusion is legitimate that, as God excluded *chattel slavery* from patriarchal government—from Abraham to Moses—and from the decalogue, the moral code of the Hebrews, he no where else made provision for the institution, and that the system has no sanction in the Old Testament. However, I will notice the strongest case of Hebrew servants, and the one most relied on to support American slavery: “Both thy bondmen and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall you buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land; and they shall be your possession.



And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen forever." Lev. xxv, 44-46. If this Scripture does not sustain American slavery it certainly has no support in the whole Bible, for there is nothing half so plausible in the entire book.

1. The distinct question now is, whether the Old Testament sanctions and sustains the doctrine of *voluntary and limited service, or involuntary, absolute, and perpetual slavery in its chattel form.* That both can be true, as to the same persons, is literally impossible. That slavery existed among the heathen in the latter sense is not a question; but did God allow and sanction it in any of its essential principles among his peculiar people? You assert that God provided "in the Jewish constitution" for two distinct forms of domestic slavery among the Hebrews, "the *one*, the enslavement, in the true generic sense, of Hebrews in given circumstances, for a definite period; and the *other*, the enslavement, in the same sense, of the neighboring heathen, in *perpetuity*"—page 143—but of the truth of this you have totally failed to furnish the proof. You have distinctly admitted what, indeed, no scholar will deny, that the term "*servant*," as translated from the original Scriptures, "*is generic*;" and, as a genus is necessarily of



greater extent than a *species*, hence your assertion is contradicted by the very facts you adduce. You have cited several cases of Hebrew servitude, each of which has its characteristic distinction as a *species* belonging to the *genus*—SERVANT; but neither of them contains the least element of slavery; namely, *the right of property in the person of the slave as a chattel in the hands of his owner*. Here is your capital blunder, and that of the whole pro-slavery school, when attempting to press the Bible into the service of the system, in making *slavery*, in its chattel form, a *genus*, and every kind of subordination and service a *species* and a mere degree or grade of slavery. In all cases of *Hebrew servants*, except that of criminals, which has nothing to do with this question, sanctioned by the Divine law, the service was voluntary, the subordinate being directly or indirectly a party to the contract; it was also limited in duration and rendered for just compensation. His principal—for owner he had none—had no shadow of *right of property in the person of the servant*; and he, or his “kinsman,” could at any time cancel the contract by paying the balance on his unexpired time; but, if this was not done, his time of service terminated by express law at the “year of release.” So far, therefore, as the case of *Hebrew servants* is concerned the law of God is explicit, beyond

the power of evasion, that their service was voluntary, and that it was limited as to time—precisely the opposite of American slavery.

2. The only remaining question here is, the condition of *heathen* servants under the Hebrew code, and a few facts will place this beyond controversy with all who revere the Bible as the word of God. As slavery existed among the heathen in its perpetual and property form, and slaves were considered and treated as articles of trade, bought and sold in the market by *third persons*, it is quite convenient for the slave system to make out a plausible case by interpreting the twenty-fifth chapter of Leviticus by the operations of a heathen or southern slave-market, and by representing God as legalizing the system by licensing his peculiar people to engage in the cruel and odious traffic! Divine Wisdom appears to have anticipated this perversion of his word, and to have made special provisions against it. (1.) Where is there a single instance in the whole Bible where *God authorizes or sanctions the buying and selling of human beings as property to THIRD PERSONS?* That is, that A. should take B. as a chattel, and sell him to C., to be used as merchandise? No such authority can be found. And notwithstanding this fact, the whole fabric of American slavery, as far as its claimed support from the Old Testament

is concerned, is built on the opposite assumption as its only foundation. A miserable infatuation, that a system of such magnitude for evil to millions of the redeemed race should set up such a claim, not only without foundation in truth, but in the face of facts to the contrary—the Hebrew father disposing of his daughter forms no exception to the fact, for, as a part of the contract, she was to become the *wife*—not *chattel*—of her superior, or his son—for, (2.) God has not only not sanctioned such an operation, but denounced it in terms, and requires the perpetrator to be punished with death. “And he that stealeth A MAN”—whether *Hebrew* or *heathen*—“and selleth him, or if he be found in his hands, HE SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO DEATH.” Ex. xxi, 16. “If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and making merchandise of him, or selleth him, then the thief shall die; and thou shalt put evil away from among you.” Deut. xxiv, 7. He that stealeth a man—from whom? From any other owner except himself? Surely not. Because, no man can, with the approbation of God, possess the right of property in the person of another. That was the sin of heathen slavery, against which Jehovah set his face with a firmness equal to the purity of his holy law and the magnitude of the crime.

The text, then, means, that he who, by physical force, fraud, or any other means, takes possession of another, and sells him as a chattel to a *third person*, or if he be found in his possession, with the design to sell or use him as *property*, "he shall be put to death." So intensely detestable was this involuntary slavery of the heathen, and the idea of making "merchandise" of men, in the sight of God, that he made *death*, without any provision for pardon or commutation, the penalty for the crime! (3.) To demonstrate his disapprobation of the entire system of heathen slavery and to counteract its barbarous influence, God incorporated into the Hebrew code a stringent *anti*-"Fugitive-Slave law," for the special protection of all such as might assume their natural, inalienable rights, and escape from the oppressions of slavery and seek freedom among his people. "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee. He shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him." Deut. xxiii, 15. The fact, therefore, is unquestionable, that God has denounced the punishment of death against the crime of selling human beings, as merchandise, to third persons; and, also, by his own authority, protects as freemen the victims of this

heinous crime, who have fled from its grasp, to find liberty among his people. (4.) These facts taken together not only amount to a reaffirmance of the will of God, as to man's natural rights to human freedom, and an absolute condemnation of involuntary, perpetual slavery, but they leave only one rule of explanation of the text—"thy bondmen shall be of the heathen that are round about you, and the children of the strangers that sojourn among you; of them shall you buy." Buy them of whom? Of their self-styled owners? Unquestionably not; for that would be selling a "man as merchandise," to a third person—the very act against which God has denounced the penalty of death, unless you maintain the absurdity, that God will inflict *death* upon the *seller*, but visit with his smiles and *approbation* the *buyer*!! "Of them shall you *buy*"—precisely the same *term* that is used in regard to Hebrew servants, where the case is perfectly clear that there was no right of property in the person of the servants, but simply the procuring of service on a contract with those who were to serve. But as perpetuity is of incalculable importance to the system of slavery, great stress is placed on the term, "they shall be your bondmen forever." You need not, as a scholar, be told that this term is frequently used in the Bible in an *accommodated* sense. This case is an



example. "Forever" here must mean either duration without limit, or a limited period of time. The former would take slavery in its chattel form into eternity. This is impossible; and, besides, the pious will there have greater riches and honors than slavery could possibly confer, and the wicked will have other business than buying and selling human beings, as there will be no market for such merchandise there! It means, therefore, beyond all question, a *limited* period, and the length of time can only be determined by the facts and circumstances of the case. The Hebrews were allowed to procure servants from among the heathen round about them, and of the strangers dwelling in their midst, not from a *third person*, but by contract with those who were to serve. The time might be either to the year of jubilee, or during the lifetime of the parties; for, as the relation, whatever might be its peculiar character, was not hereditary, it could not extend beyond one or both those periods. In either case the system of involuntary, hereditary slavery is precluded by the authority of God. If the latter, the subordinate bound himself, for proper remuneration, to serve his principal during his life, and if he survived his master he was to render service, under the same regulations, to his children during his life. The former, however, is



most likely: "And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof; it shall be a jubilee unto you, and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his own family." Lev. xxv, 10. "One law shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you." Exodus xii, 49. It is not at all material which of those views is preferred; for, while one or the other must be the true meaning of the text, they are both alike fatal to involuntary, hereditary slavery, the system you are trying to sustain. The facts are obvious. Hebrews were allowed to sell themselves; that is, to contract to serve a principal, or master, under the Divine regulations, for the term of six years, the seventh being "the year of release," or till the "year of jubilee." That contract could be canceled at any time by paying the master for the unexpired time to the year of release, or the jubilee.

This class of subordinates are recognized in the Bible as hired servants. Those of the heathen and strangers, on the same principle, as voluntary parties to the contract, *sold or bound* themselves for equitable compensation to serve to the jubilee, or during life; and as there was no provision made, which was understood by the parties, for

their redemption, or to cancel the contract, as in the case of Hebrew servants, either by themselves or their relatives, they were considered "bond-servants," or "bondmen." This difference between Hebrew and heathen servants was founded in wisdom and goodness. The time had not arrived in the purpose of divine Providence "to preach the Gospel to every creature;" the Canaanitish nations, and those around them, were nationally past reformation, and fast filling up the measure of their sins for national destruction; but as there was a Rahab in the devoted Jericho, who believed in the true God and was saved, so there were many *individuals* among those heathen within the reach of reformation, and God made provision in the Hebrew code for such, with their own consent, to be incorporated among his peculiar people, and to enjoy the privileges of the civilization, education, and religion of the Hebrews. Their protracted service was one of their blessings. When brought into this relation to the Hebrews they were redeemed from idolatry, and protected against the depredations of *man-stealers* and slave-dealers, and instructed in the knowledge and worship of God, having "every thing necessary for life and godliness." Had the period of their service been shorter, they were liable to return to their heathen associates, and through their influence to their

former habits of idolatry, lose the knowledge of God, and at last perish in the darkness of heathenism. So far, therefore, is the Hebrew code from originating or sanctioning the system of involuntary, hereditary slavery—such as the American system—that, from whatever point it is viewed, the face of God is set against the entire principle, and his authoritative provisions against it, if carried into practice, would speedily blot the system out of being and banish the abomination from the earth.

That this general view is correct, and, indeed, the only correct one, will appear beyond the power of a reasonable doubt, if we just suppose the contrary, which involves the absurdity, if not real profanity, of making God at the same time alike *the patron* and *the opposer* of *limited service*, and of involuntary, *perpetual slavery*, and of *man-stealing*; and that he deals death to the sellers and blessings to the buyers of stolen human beings!

As those cases examined are supposed to be the strongest in the Old Testament, in support of chattel slavery, and as they entirely fail to sustain, or, in any form, to countenance the system, it is not necessary to notice other particular cases of less importance.

*Fourth.* I ask your attention to still another view of the Old Testament Scriptures on this

question. 1. Hebrew servitude, by whatever name called, or in whatever light viewed, *was* either a *part* of the external economy and of the moral code of that people, and peculiar to their dispensation, or *it was not*. You can not allow the latter without stultifying yourself and contradicting the whole pro-slavery school, who, with yourself, claim Abraham as a model patriarchal slave-buyer and slave-owner, and the Hebrew institutions as a model code of slave laws and a complete system of patriarchal domestic slavery. To admit the former is absolutely fatal to the whole system of American slavery; for, in *extent*, it was confined, by Divine authority, to that small territory which God gave to Abraham and his posterity, as the temporal possession of his peculiar people, and can impart no authority whatever to any person or people beyond that boundary. If this is not the fact, and their servitude was in any case slavery proper, the Hebrews might now be buying and selling slaves in every state in the republic! As to *duration*, it was limited by the same authority, by the duration of their peculiar dispensation; which, with its code of servitude, and their national existence also, have been abolished by the order of God for more than eighteen hundred years. It is a problem of no easy solution, that men of intelligence should struggle, as for life, to rear an

institution for evil, of the magnitude of American slavery, on a foundation which either never had an existence in the form they claim, or, if it had, has been terminated centuries since, by the same authority that gave it a limited and temporary being. It may not be expected, however, that a system based on injustice will be very scrupulous as to the means of its defense. 2. The institution of Hebrew servitude and the system of American slavery are not only not essentially analogous, but they are inherently antagonistic. (1.) The fact can not be concealed, though it should be denied, that the latter had its origin in the sin of robbery and man-stealing, and that it is sustained by the same operation, though in a far less honorable form than the original; namely, in Africa the adult, who was generally the victim of the outrage, had a chance to escape by flight, or to defend his liberty at the sacrifice of his life. But under the same system in America the victim is the infant, which is seized by the system at its birth, when its natural weakness forbids either flight or resistance, and it falls, a helpless victim, into the hands of this heartless system of Heaven-interdicted man-stealing! Under the Hebrew system this very operation, by which alone the American system lives, was denounced by the ALMIGHTY as a crime, for which the perpetrators should surely be



put to death. (2.) Under the American system the service is involuntary, unremunerated, and perpetual. The slave has no choice as to whether he will be a slave, or, as such, whose property he shall be, what market he shall be sold at as a chattel, or what treatment he shall receive as an article of merchandise. The Divine arrangement among the Hebrews was just the opposite. The service was voluntary, the servant being a party to the contract, which secured to him just compensation for his services; and the time of service was limited generally to six years or less, and could, in no case, extend beyond the Jubilee, or the lifetime of a single individual. (3.) The American system claims the right of territorial extension without limitation; hence the startling efforts already made, stained with blood and marked by murder, to plant the institution in the free territories of this nation; while the system of Hebrew servitude was limited to the land of Canaan. (4.) The system you labor so assiduously to defend deprives its subjects—the slaves—of the light of letters, the knowledge of science and literature, the essential means of civilization, and of intellectual and moral elevation. It even denies to them the written word of God—the Bible! The Hebrew institution secured to its subjects—the servants—all those



privileges and blessings as they existed in their times.

Not to mention other points, the *analogy* between the system of Hebrew servitude and the system of American slavery is a mere fiction—a bald falsity; while the *contrast* is a positive fact: the one clearly originating in the wisdom, justice, and benevolence of God, the other in the depravity, cupidity, injustice, and cruelty of men!

*Fifth.* As a profound Biblical scholar, you need not be informed of the fact that the entire testimony of the Hebrew prophets is in exact conformity to, and fully confirms and sustains, the facts and principles which I have established. 1. They denounce the judgments of Heaven against the violation of the domestic relations which God has ordained, and which are immutably opposed to the principle of slavery in its chattel and property form. The strict observance of the precepts of the prophets under this head would annihilate slavery from the earth. 2. They proclaim the judgments of God, in unmeasured terms, against the injustice and sin of oppression in every form and degree, of either Hebrew or heathen. Their imperative demand, by the authority of God, is that the oppressor should “undo the heavy burdens and let the oppressed go free, and that every yoke should be broken,” that every subject and citizen

should have unrestrained liberty to serve and obey God according to the moral constitution of the Divine government, and man's individual responsibility to his Maker. 3. Furthermore, in the most solemn form, reiterated under various circumstances, they pledge the purity, justice, truth, and power of God in behalf of the oppressed and against the oppressors; that though he may bear long, and seem to be forgetful of their sufferings, his ears are ever attentive to their cries, and his eyes witness their tears and wrongs; and, in due time, if their yoke is not broken off, and their burdens removed, his arm will be stretched out in retributive judgments for their deliverance, and the chastisement if not the utter ruin of their heartless oppressors.

Here, also, either obedience to the Divine requirements in removing the burdens, breaking the yoke from the necks of the degraded, and letting "the oppressed go free," or a proper reverence and regard for the threatened judgments of Heaven, would speedily and finally destroy the whole system of American slavery. Having shown conclusively that no where in the Old Testament did God either originate, sustain, sanction, or in any wise countenance *involuntary, hereditary, unremunerated, perpetual chattel slavery*; and that, on the contrary, he excluded it from the system of pa-

triarchal servitude, from the law of the ten commandments, from the whole Hebrew code; and that the prophets denounced it as a terrible sin against God and man; and that all these, separately and together, bear an eternal testimony against the entire system of making chattels of human beings, I turn to an examination of the New Testament on this subject.

In the mean time I remain yours. as ever,

J. H. P.

## LETTER XIV.

## THE NEW TESTAMENT AND SLAVERY.

Slavery examined by the New Testament—The doctrines and teaching of Christ—Condemned by both—The moral principles he established if obeyed would annihilate slavery—The doctrines and teachings of the apostles—The same result—Servitude among the Jews in the time of Christ and his apostles—Let as many servants as are under the yoke, examined.

REV. W. A. SMITH, D. D.,—As the Old Testament renders no support to the system of slavery, for which you contend, if it receives any sanction whatever from revelation, it must be found in the New Testament; and, if found there, it must be either in the teachings of Christ, his apostles, or the spirit and genius of the Gospel, or in all of them together.

*First.* You have presumed largely on the discourses and example of the Savior, in support of domestic slavery; that is, American slavery. After assuming what never was true, that “in the days of the Savior” the Jews were a slaveholding community to an extent not exceeded by any “state in this Union,” and that “the hospitalities of every family he visited were administered to

him by domestic slaves"—domestic chattels according to your assumption—you add, "And in all this time, and under all these circumstances, not one word is known to have escaped him, either in public or in private, charging the relation of master and slave to be sinful!" (Page 143.) On the contrary, "This relation is made the subject of some of his most eloquent allusions, and the basis of some of his most instructive parables." (Page 144.) 1. I have fully exposed the absurdities of these assumptions in a previous letter, but the importance of the subject will justify further notice here. The entire strength of your position and that of the whole pro-slavery school in regard to the Savior is, (1.) That he did not condemn as sinful "the relation of master and slave," by which you mean the relation of legal *owner* of a human being as *chattel property*; but I have shown that no such relation existed among the Jews. (2.) That by "allusions," and by making this chattel and property relation "the basis of some of his most instructive parables," he sanctioned it as a patriarchal and godly institution. As to his "allusions" and "parables," it has already been demonstrated that to suppose he referred to slaves as chattel property in the cases you have cited—which are the strongest you could adduce for such a purpose—would make him utter extreme non-

sense, absurdity, and falsehood! And if it were admitted that he referred to slavery in its property form in those "allusions," it would no more follow that he approved it, than that he sanctioned back-sliding, swindling, and murder, because he "alluded" to the "foolish virgins," the "unjust steward," and "the murderers" of the servants and son of the owner of the vineyard; and, indeed, "made them the basis of instructive parables." After all, however, the strongest hope of proslaveryism is, by some process or other, to compel Christ to be a kind of *negative* witness in favor of human bondage and the degradation of slavery. When put in the form of an argument it is, "The divine Savior, as a holy teacher, condemned *in terms* every thing that is sinful; but 'not a word is known to have escaped him, either in public or private, declaring the relation of master and slave to be sinful;' therefore, involuntary, perpetual, unremunerated slavery is not sinful, and, of course, is morally right in the sight of God." That this is the strength of the proslavery argument, as far as Christ is concerned, is demonstrable by simply supposing the *contrary* of either of the propositions, or of the conclusion. And its falsity and absurdity are equally demonstrable by testing it on a thousand facts. For example: "Not a word is known to have escaped him, either



in public or private, declaring *in terms* horse-stealing, counterfeiting, forgery, arson, poisoning a neighbor's stock, and a thousand other palpable crimes, to be sinful!" Therefore, all these are godly works, sanctioned by the Savior!! And the advocates of slavery will not be allowed to escape these revolting imputations, which their logic casts upon the moral character of Christ, by asserting that he condemned all immoralities in *principle*, and that the principles of moral duty which he established would destroy these and all other sins of man; for, it is on this very ground that he bears the most withering testimony against the whole system of slavery in all its chattel modifications. The gross fallacy in this supposed support of slavery by the Savior is, in assuming, in the face of facts to the contrary, that he denounced by name, and in terms, every thing morally wrong and sinful. This never was the principle on which the Divine will was revealed to man, and all conclusions based on such a view are necessarily false.

And as no just conclusion can be drawn from either the silence of Christ or his allusions to particular relations or practices as being sinful, the proper questions are: *What moral principles did he establish, for the moral government of all the relations, obligations, duties, and practice of all men, in*

*all ages of the world?* and, IS IT MORALLY POSSIBLE TO RECONCILE SLAVERY, IN ITS CHATTEL CHARACTER, WITH THESE DIVINE PRINCIPLES? 2. Christ opened his public ministry, in the presence of the "multitudes," with the distinct announcement: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." And then with a wisdom and authority truly divine, he brought out the moral constitution—the *decalogue*—in its true spirituality and moral force, extending its claims to all the passions of the heart, the purposes of the mind, and the actions of the life, making an impure look adultery, the hatred of the heart murder, and denouncing the "danger of hell-fire" against the offenders! He especially throws the sovereign protection of the law around the marriage relation and its reciprocal obligations and privileges; and that there might be neither doubt nor mistake, as to the harmony of his doctrines and the teachings of the Old Testament, he affirms, "This is the law and the prophets." He closes this infallible explanation and application of the moral law, by giving the most perfect and inimitable epitome of it for all practicable purposes among all men, in all ages: "Therefore, all things

whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets." Although with less external grandeur than attended its announcement on Sinai, yet with the same Divine authority the Savior recognized, re-enacted, and proclaimed the law of the ten commandments in full force in the moral government of God among men.

This "sermon on the mount," *embodying the decalogue as the great moral principle, is the moral CONSTITUTION of the Gospel kingdom on earth, and the rule of final judgment in the great day of eternal retribution.* Now, sir, I have already shown, with a moral certainty that deprecates no criticism, that the decalogue, which guards the domestic relations, duties, and privileges with sovereign authority, and chattel slavery, which practically treats these relations and duties with utter contempt, are inherently and necessarily opposites. And, also, that the prophets, from Moses to Malachi, proclaimed the same doctrines of the moral law, demanding liberty for the enslaved and oppressed, and denouncing the judgments of Heaven against the oppressors. In the fullness of time, "God manifest in the flesh" republished this law, in its authoritative application to the motives, hearts, and lives of all men, in all their relations, obligations, and duties to God, and to each other, with the results for

time and eternity; and under the application of this moral system by the Savior, as well as in its origin and history, slavery—American slavery—has no more sanction than adultery, man-stealing, or murder. In the face of all these facts, you strangely affirm, that in all the public and private life of Jesus Christ “not one word escaped him” in condemnation of this nefarious system of human oppression. It would be difficult to decide whether a man should be pitied for his ignorance, or despised for dishonesty, who, on hearing the judge announce the *general law* against breaking the peace, robbery and theft, because he did not mention every case *in terms*, should knock you down with a gutta-percha cane, and rob you of your gold watch worth three hundred dollars; and when arrested for the crime, should plead in justification that the judge had authorized and sanctioned the whole operation, because “not one word escaped him” against the use of such an instrument with which to commit violence upon you, or of robbing you, by name, of a watch of just that kind and value! His plea would be equally as good as that of the system of slavery, on the assumed silence of the Savior.

The real magnitude of the indignity offered to the divine Redeemer, in attempting to make him the patron of chattel slavery, can never be appre-

ciated, till it shall be seen in the light of eternity. It makes him contradict himself and matters of fact. When he says, "A good tree can not bring forth evil fruit," if he sanctions the system of slavery—American slavery, for that is what you are pleading for—then it must be "a good tree," but its whole fruit is an accumulation of *evil*, physical, political, social, and moral, at which the heart of benevolence sickens, and upon which Heaven frowns. When he says, "Thou shalt love God with all thy heart," he means, "and at the same time you may rob the innocent of their liberty, disregard the relations God has ordained, break up families and sell the members as chattels, luxuriate in the fruit of the unremunerated toils of those who have 'reaped down your harvests, and from whom their wages have been withheld,' and whose cries are going up to heaven against you—go on, for there is a perfect harmony between *holiness of heart* and *unholiness of life!*" And when he says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," he means, "you shall snatch the Bible from his hands, shut out the light of letters from his mind, chain the intellect in ignorance, break up his domestic and social relations, and use him as a chattel in the shop, field, or market, regardless of his interests or happiness in this or the future world!"

Still further. If the Savior sanctioned the system of slavery you defend, then he who came to reveal and confirm the word of God to man, and enjoined it as a duty to "search the Scriptures," forbids millions of those he redeemed to read the Scriptures; he who came into the world "to open the prison doors to them that are bound," forged new bolts and heavier chains with which to confine and afflict the oppressed; he who came a "teacher from God," and is "the light of the world," indorsed and established a system that depends for its being and perpetuity on the ignorance, darkness, and barbarism of its victims; he who came "to bind up the broken in heart, and comfort them that mourn," sanctioned and authorized a system which has caused deeper sorrows to flow and more hearts to bleed than any other system under the whole heavens! The grossest infidelity could not commit a greater outrage upon the character and teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ than slavery does, in claiming his sanction for its support! Christ the patron of slavery!! He established moral *principles* of Divine authority, universal application, and perpetual obligation, either of which, if faithfully applied and carried out in practice, would banish slavery out of being; and, taken together, assails it from every point, and attacks it in every element as the mon-



ster sin of men and the moral curse of the earth. He meets it with the terrors of the Divine law, and the threatenings of the holy prophets, and in his own supreme authority denounces the terrors of "hell" against all who disregard his commands. His whole life and doctrines are a perpetual divine testimony against injustice, cruelty, oppression, and moral impurity of every kind, all of which are chargeable on slavery, in one form or other, as a system of incurable depravity.

*Second.* I turn to inquire, now, whether the apostles patronized the system of chattel slavery. Now, their doctrine on this subject, as well as all others, either *is* or it *is not* in harmony with the law, the prophets, and the Savior. None but an infidel will affirm the latter; and if it were even demonstrated, it would not prove the truth or divine character of slavery, but only that they contradict the law, the prophets, and the divine Savior on the grave question of robbing men of their rights and converting them into human chattels.

I unhesitatingly affirm that on this, as on all other subjects of Divine teaching, there is perfect harmony between the inspired writers. The same infinite Spirit directed the writers, whether prophets or apostles; and, although they wrote and taught at different and distant periods of the

world, and under almost every variety of circumstance, *they all embody the great principles of God's moral law*; bear an unbroken testimony against injustice, oppression, and sin in every form; guard and protect the domestic relations as the universal ordinance of God, and enjoin, on pain of eternal perdition, supreme love to God and reciprocal, universal love to man. These divine principles, "according to the analogy of faith," constitute the *infallible* rule by which to interpret every thing that either prophets or apostles have written under all circumstances, and on all subjects. Any interpretation or application of the teachings of these "holy men of God," which would conflict with the moral purity, Divine authority, and universal obligation of the decalogue, or even by remote implication release man in any degree from the obligation to love God with all his heart and his neighbor as himself; or that would give the least countenance to injustice, oppression, cruelty, the violation of the relations of husband and wife, parents and children, or to sin of any kind either in systems or individuals in any degree or character, is absolutely erroneous, if not really wicked. As it has been clearly shown that there is perfect harmony between the *law*, the *prophets*, and the *Divine Redeemer* on these great moral principles and duties, and that they bear a separate, joint,

and authoritative testimony against slavery, particularly American slavery, that is, *the right of property in the persons of human beings as chattels and articles of commerce*, all that remains is to show that every thing the apostles have said on the subject of servants is in conformity to the same principles.

To do this I need only take what you appear to consider the clearest case in the New Testament as a specimen of the whole. "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort." 1 Tim. vi, 1, 2. Interpreting this case by the system of American slavery, instead of the analogy of faith and the moral law, you make short work with the subject, thus: "Paul's denunciation—1 Tim. vi, 3—of the teachers of abolition doctrines, that they '*consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ,*' is sufficient reason to believe that he was always understood to approve of the relation, and to condemn, in express terms, all attempts to abolish it, as a duty of the religion which he taught." (Page 144.)

In this attempt to press Paul into the service of the system of southern slavery, you *assume* the points to be proved. (1.) That “master,” in the text, means a man who has the *moral* and *legal right of property* in the *person*—“body, soul, and spirit”—of a fellow-man, and by virtue of that relation, as the owner of his *person*, has a *right* to separate him forever from his wife and children, and to sell him in the market as he would a beast of burden, to the highest bidder. (2.) You assume that “servant” means a human being whose *person* is subjected to all the accidents of *property*, and who sustains the same relation to the laws of property of an article of merchandise, and is, “*to all intents and purposes, a chattel in the hands of his owner.*” (3.) That this is a just relation, a godly system, and a righteous traffic in human souls and bodies, and that “Paul condemns, in express terms, all attempts to abolish either, as a duty of the religion which he taught.” (4.) That Paul enjoined Timothy to “teach these things,” and affirmed that, “if any man teach otherwise . . . he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth.” That this is quite an array of assumptions as the only hope of making out a case,

none will deny; but that it is your true, and, indeed, only position is demonstrable by only supposing the contrary, which will not only deprive you of the testimony of Paul, and, with him, all the apostles in support of slavery, but will turn his inspired authority against the whole system.

Suppose Paul recognized no such right of ownership in the master; no such chattel character in the person of the servant; no justice in such relation; no godliness in the system, or righteousness in the traffic; and that "the religion which he taught" was designed to "abolish" all unjust relations, ungodly systems, and all unrighteous traffic of every kind; and that these were "the things Timothy was to teach;" and especially "that the LAW is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers, for man-slayers, [precisely what the system of slavery has done by thousands,] for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for MEN-STEALERS, [the very crime in which slavery—American slavery—had its origin, and by which it has been supported to the present day, and must be till it is banished from the land, and against which God has denounced the penalty of death,] for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that



is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust." 1 Tim. i, 9-11.

Now, dear sir, it must be clear beyond the power to doubt, either that your assumptions, which make Paul the patron of southern slavery—for that is *the* question before us—are true, or the contrary as stated above is the fact. It is impossible that both can be true; and yet, one or the other must present the apostle's real position on this important question. Your position makes him contradict the law of God, which punished with death those who claimed property in the person of a man, and the right to sell him to a third person as "merchandise." You make him contradict the prophets, who every-where denounced slavery, and proclaimed the terrors of the *law* against injustice and oppression in every form. Your assumptions make him contradict the Savior, who sanctioned and republished "the law and the prophets," with a Divine authority which withers and denounces slavery in all its elements and powers. They make him contradict himself, for he puts "man-stealers"—who, as explained in the law of God, are men claiming property in the persons of human beings, and the right to sell them as chattels to third persons, the precise character of American slavery—in the same category with



the vilest offenders of the fallen race, and threatens them with the heaviest penalty of the violated law; and if, when he says "servants, obey your masters," he means to recognize the person of the servant as a *chattel*, and the master as the *owner* of that chattel, and to sanction that relation, the contradiction is palpable, and Paul was an impostor! Just so sure, then, as Paul was not a deceiver, and as an inspired teacher could not contradict the law and the prophets, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and himself; and as he has fully recognized the Divine authority of them all, and has specifically quoted them against slavery, and enjoined Timothy to "teach these things as the sound doctrine of the Gospel committed to his trust," and denounced all who oppose this "sound doctrine" against "men-stealers"—slavery—as "ignorant of the truth," just so sure is he a swift witness against the whole system of chattel slavery, and making merchandise of men! His entire teaching, and that of the other apostles, is in harmony with these facts and principles.

"Let as many servants as are under the yoke"—under bondage—that is, let all those bondmen or servants who have become Christians, honor their profession by rendering proper obedience and due respect to their masters and superiors, "that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed."

They were "bond servants" under the provisions of the Hebrew code, which the apostles perfectly understood, and which made the servant a voluntary party to the contract, and positively limited the service, generally within six years, but in certain circumstances allowed it to continue during the lifetime of the subordinate.

Many such cases no doubt existed where persons had entered into this relation, and were *bound* to serve for an agreed compensation for a limited time, or even for life; but, with a renewed heart, higher motives, and in the light of the Gospel, saw they could greatly better their condition if this relation was dissolved. Such persons would be strongly tempted to violate their engagements, to the discredit of the Gospel and their own Christian character. The apostles enjoin Christian fidelity, though it should be at the sacrifice of all temporal interests and even life itself.

This view is fully confirmed by the authoritative requirement, "Masters"—not owners—"give unto your servants"—not your property—"that which is JUST and EQUAL; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven who is no respecter of persons."

A limited servitude, for proper remuneration, as provided in the Divine law, will explain and harmonize with the whole Scriptures every thing the

apostles have said on the subject in the New Testament; while any other view involves all the contradictions and absurdities, not to say profanities, as exposed above.

I am aware, indeed, that men of learning, talents, and piety have, from prejudice of education, pride of opinion, or some other cause, allowed that *the apostles received into the Church, as members, slaveholders; men who claimed the right of property in the persons of men, and the right to buy and sell them as chattels and articles of merchandise.* This vague and unauthorized admission has afforded great comfort to slave-owners and slave-dealers, and especially such of them as profess Christianity. Now, as the advocates of this notion have utterly failed to adduce a particle of tangible and reliable testimony, that a single member of the Church under the apostles' administration ever bought, sold, owned, or used a human being as a chattel, claiming the right of property in his person as an article of merchandise—I deny and spurn the whole affair as an absurd fiction, having no foundation whatever in fact, and as not deserving the least respect, till sustained by clear and unquestionable proof. It is a mere flimsy presumption, which arrays fictions against facts; the law of God against itself; inspired teachers against each other, and sacrifices the veracity of the Bi-

ble, and the purity and dignity of Christianity at the bloody shrine of slavery. In the name of pure Christianity I enter a solemn protest against any and all such admissions, inferences, or by whatever name called, till sustained by proof as plain as the word of God: "He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he is found in his possession, he shall surely be put to death."

As both the Old and New Testaments bear a withering testimony against involuntary, unremunerated, perpetual slavery, both in terms and throughout their whole range of inference and implication, I might here close the subject; but as I wish to give the system every chance for its life, as far as the Scriptures are concerned, I will reserve for another letter the inquiry whether the spirit and genius of the Gospel can afford it any relief.

Yours as ever,

J. H. P.

## LETTER XV.

THE SPIRIT AND DESIGN OF THE GOSPEL  
AND SLAVERY.

Does the spirit and genius of the Gospel sustain slavery?—Men sustain individual relations, and owe individual duties to God which allow of no substitute—The Gospel recognizes these relations, and requires the discharge of the duties—The Gospel is opposed to every practice and institution, whatever may be its name or character, that impedes its progress, resists its influence, or hinders its intended results—Slavery is chargeable with resisting the Gospel in all these respects—It shuts out light from the minds of its subjects—Keeps them in ignorance—Desecrates all the domestic relations—Degrades men to the condition of brutes—The Gospel assails it in every element and from every point—The conflict is hastening to an issue—The system must perish, or Divine judgments visit the nation.

REV. DR. W. A. SMITH,—*Third.* Does the spirit and genius of the Gospel sustain the system of slavery? 1. “The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to them that believe.” It creates a special relation between man and his Maker, through the merits of Christ, which is demonstrated to the hearts of men, and especially those who believe, by the operations of the Holy Spirit. As, in the wisdom of God, no system can be substituted for the Gospel as a means of salvation, and the medium of the knowledge of God and of

the interests of eternity, so neither can any proxy or institution be substituted for the knowledge of God, and personal faith, love, and obedience in order to individual salvation. Hence, salvation is a personal matter between the sinful soul and the pardoning God, which admits of no intervention between the parties, but the merits and mediation of Christ as the sinner's only plea, and the agency of the divine Spirit to communicate grace and salvation to the believing heart.

These positions are so clear, so divine, and Scriptural, that to discard them and suppose the contrary would be a total rejection of the whole Christian system. There is no fact more clearly revealed to man, or more deeply graven upon his conscience, when enlightened by Divine truth, than that God holds every man individually responsible to him for the discharge of his personal and relative duties as a condition of his happiness here and in the future world. To adduce all the proof would be to transcribe a large portion of the Bible, and to record the convictions of every man on this point. A single instance, the one, two, and five talents, will sufficiently illustrate the case. There was a special trust committed to *individuals* for their personal benefit, to be improved according to their capacities and circumstances. As the trust was individual, so also was the responsibility



and final results. Two of them performed the conditions and received the reward; the other, though he retained the trust unimpaired, failed to improve it and was dishonored, punished, ruined. Such are the moral relations and responsibilities of every man under the provisions of the Gospel, that his individual faithfulness will be *graciously* rewarded with salvation and heaven, or his unfaithfulness *justly* punished with guilt and perdition. 2. "The Gospel as the means of salvation" must be adapted to all the moral and spiritual necessities of man, otherwise it would only be a mockery of his misery. What are the moral wants of the world? What man has lost, and what he has become involved in by sin, will indicate with sufficient clearness, for the purposes of this inquiry, what he needs to restore him to happiness and to prepare him for heaven.

By his apostasy man forfeited the Divine favor, and lost the moral image of God from his soul; and, also, that peace and happiness which arise from a consciousness of purity and innocence. He being involved in deep depravity, affecting his whole nature, "the eyes of his understanding darkened," his heart hardened, his passions and appetites perverted, his affections alienated from God, his conscience guilty, exposed to the penalty of the violated law, helpless and in moral ruin,

having no power or means within himself either to repair his calamity or to escape its fearful and eternal results. Hence, ignorance of the Divine character and government, and of the relations mankind sustain to them and to each other, and the violation of those relations and disregard for the personal and relative duties arising out of them, have characterized the fallen race, and filled the world with wickedness and woes! But "when the world by wisdom knew not God, life and immortality were brought to light by the Gospel," and when the wisdom of the world had in vain exhausted its resources to meet the moral necessities of man, the Gospel revealed alike the source of the world's malady and its only remedy. The adaptation of this potent remedy to the evils and necessities of man, is seen with a clearness that can not be mistaken by the candid, nor resisted by the skeptical. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," is the opening salutation of the Gospel, and embodies the sublime doctrine of the atonement, by the vicarious sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, with its *unconditional* benefits of light and truth, and its *conditional* benefits of grace and salvation, as the ground of the sinner's hope of acceptance with God and the "desire of all nations."

The Gospel based upon and embodying this

great doctrine of atonement, assails ignorance and sin in all their forms, and diffuses the light of truth upon every relation, duty, and condition of man. Hence the prophet, in anticipation of the fullness of the Gospel, "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thy hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." Isa. xlii, 6, 7. The Savior responds: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and the recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Luke iv, 18, 19.

From this specimen it is perfectly clear that the Gospel addresses itself *directly* to the intellectual and moral state of man, and, *indirectly*, to his physical condition in all his various relations in life, with the view of eradicating all that is wrong in either, and of establishing every thing that is right in all of them. Considered in this light, the provision is as extensive as the evil; it is provided for all who are involved; but all mankind are involved; the provision, therefore, is universal. The

remedy is as potent as the malady is virulent. Is man morally and spiritually "poor," "blind," "in darkness," a "prisoner," a "captive," "bound," "bruised," "broken-hearted," "in the prison-house" of ignorance, depravity, guilt, and sin? "the Gospel which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," brings full deliverance to all who accept on the terms God has prescribed—faith and obedience. In this light of the Gospel the redeemed captive sees the true character of God, and his individual relation and personal obligations of obedience to him. He sees that "he is not his own, that he is bought with a price," and that it is his imperative duty and highest honor to "glorify God in his body and spirit, which are his," and that his eternal happiness is inseparable from his fidelity to God.

According to the special design of the Gospel, he sees, appreciates, and holds sacred and of Divine appointment, the relation of husband and wife; and that the Gospel honors it by making it the symbol of the mystical relation between the Church as the bride and Christ as the bridegroom; demonstrating thereby its Divine origin, and its sacredness in the sight of God. The Gospel is equally clear in recognizing, and imperative in protecting the relation, and in enforcing the duties and obligations of parents and children. So sa-

cred is this relation, that God has made it the symbol of the household of heaven. He is the infinitely-gracious and glorious "Father, of whom the whole *family* in heaven and earth is named." The first prayer taught in the Gospel is, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." The duty of parents for the protection, instruction, improvement, usefulness, and salvation of their children is exemplified in the special interest the "heavenly Father" takes for his children—the pious of every age and nation. The reciprocal duty of children to love, honor, and obey their parents is illustrated by the unremitted obedience God requires of his children. These relations and their duties, ordained of God, recognized and protected by the Gospel, are founded in wisdom, justice, goodness, and love, and are essential to the honor, usefulness, happiness, and salvation of man, the triumphs of the Gospel of Christ, and the glory of God.

The Gospel also brings out in its true character, and teaches man to appreciate the great fact of the "*common brotherhood of mankind*;" that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the



Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being;" "we are the offspring of God." Acts xvii, 26-29.

All are redeemed by the blood of Christ: "He by the grace of God tasted death for every man;" "He is the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world;" the "Holy Spirit reproveth the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment;" "God is no respecter of persons;" "He accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor, for they all are the work of his hands." Job xxxiv, 19. In view of these facts, that every man, as it regards his personal salvation, sustains the same relation to God, to Christ, to the Holy Spirit, to time, and to eternity; and must appear before the judgment throne of Christ, and receive according to what he has done in the body, whether it be good or bad, at the hands of an impartial judge, who regardeth not the rich more than the poor—the Gospel proclaims, with authority absolutely divine, *that* universal rule of common brotherhood, "Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." One special feature of the design of the Gospel is to destroy the pride and selfishness of man, and to remove the hinderances



in the way of the brotherhood of mankind, and to wake up his sympathies and confidence, and to bring the wandering race under the influence of justice, truth, charity, and brotherly kindness toward each other, and faith, love, and obedience to God. The Gospel brings out the great truth that God requires of the Church, and consequently of every one who would be saved by the Gospel, the work of Christian charity and benevolence. "Ye are the salt of the earth;" "Ye are the light of the world;" "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify God," are some of the terms indicating individual and aggregate Christian duties under the provisions of the Gospel of the grace of God. The correctness of this view of the Gospel is fully exemplified in its history among men. Wherever its authority has been recognized, its truths believed, its precepts and teachings obeyed in faith and love, it has unchained the intellect, poured its light and truth upon the mind and conscience, reformed the life, purified the heart, aroused the slumbering genius and spirit of enterprise, and has conducted its subjects up to the highest ground, and into the clearest light of literature and science, social refinement and political justice, moral power, religious purity, and Christian charity and usefulness.

No one, therefore, who has any respect for Christianity, will question the fact that "the spirit and genius" of the Gospel aims steadily at the accomplishment of the great work of redeeming mankind from ignorance, depravity, and sin, and restoring them to the favor and image of God. The importance of a correct view of the character and design of the Gospel to a right understanding of the question before us, is my apology for detaining you so long on this point; and now I raise the following argument, to which I ask your attention and that of the whole pro-slavery school. The genius of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ does not sustain or approve, but, on the contrary, inherently and of moral necessity, is opposed to every practice, institution, system, and government that impedes its progress, resists its influence, or hinders its intended results. But the system of American slavery does all this, in regard to the millions of the enslaved in the south. Therefore, the Spirit and genius of the Gospel do *not* sustain, or in any wise countenance, but, on the contrary, are opposed to the whole system of American slavery. If the truth of the premises is conceded, the conclusion is unquestionable. To deny the first proposition would involve the absurdity of making the Gospel *approve and patronize its own opposers!* The only point, therefore,

to be established, is the truth of the second. And if you, sir, are allowed to be a competent and credible witness, I have no fears of a failure.

I. As has been fully evinced, the Gospel addresses its truths, principles, precepts, and promises to the *understanding*—the soul or mind—with the express design of disenthraling the whole immortal nature of man from superstition, idolatry, ignorance, and sin, and to elevate him to the highest standard of useful knowledge and holiness; and that wherever it has not been resisted, but cordially received and faithfully obeyed, these results have invariably followed. But the system of American slavery resists the Gospel in all these respects, in regard to the millions of the enslaved, except the preaching of a *Gospel tributary to the system!* Here, dear Doctor, I use you as a witness. You affirm: “I can not imagine that any public movement, having for its object the instruction of the blacks in reading and writing, could be made without involving the most disastrous results.” (Page 231.) Such a movement “would be repudiated and resisted by physical force.” And “the results could scarcely be less embarrassing, if sought to be accomplished by individual enterprise.” “Nothing could be more utopian than an enterprise of the kind. Public opinion would scarcely be sufficiently divided to

justify even the wildest schemer in making a serious attempt to effect it." (Page 232.) It would be treating the subject with entirely too much respect to attempt seriously to argue the question of enlightening, civilizing, Christianizing, and elevating a barbarous people to the standard of intelligence, knowledge, holiness, and usefulness, designed by the Gospel of Christ, by scrupulously excluding from them a knowledge of letters, literature, and science of every kind, even to a knowledge of the written word of God. The thing is not only condemned by the whole Bible, and practically denounced by the Christian world as wicked, but it is contemptibly absurd! And as sure as God is true, the Gospel in this particular is immutably opposed to slavery.

2. By enlightening the mind and conscience the Gospel designs to bring man to the knowledge of the true character of God, and of his moral government, and of his own relation and personal obligations to him as his Sovereign and Savior. But the system of southern slavery, by excluding from its millions of slaves an education and the knowledge to read the word of God, opposes the special design of the Gospel on the most important point in the whole range of its divine benevolence—the personal salvation of men through a correct knowledge of their individual relations and duties to God.

You have, indeed, very complaisantly said, "Many pious slaves read the word of God as a part of their family worship"—page 241—as if the knowledge to read and the privilege of reading were parts of the system of slavery, while you know that the system makes it a crime to learn the slaves to read; and, of course, criminal in them to read, if by accident and in opposition to the prohibition they have learned to read. The system, as such, can not be allowed to escape from its responsibilities and merited odium under cover of the kindness of individuals, who either repudiate the system in their hearts, and violate its barbarous provisions in privately teaching a few slaves to read the word of God, or whose hearts are so much better than their heads, that while the latter leads them to maintain the system, the former prompts them to violate its prohibitions to learn slaves to read the word of life. Whatever motives may influence such persons, their actions are a standing condemnation of the system. In this particular also the Gospel and slavery are in open hostility to each other.

3. As has been demonstrated, the Gospel maintains, with the sternness of Divine authority, the sacredness of the domestic relations. The system of American slavery ignores, tramples under foot and outrages all those relations, by tearing asunder

husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, friends and relatives, and selling them in the market, and separating them for life, with a heartlessness that should make heathenism blush for shame! On this point God and slavery are at issue, and the result to the system will be fearful.

4. The Gospel requires "parents to bring up [educate] their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The system of slavery makes it punishable by law, for slave parents, or others for them, to educate their children even so as to read and learn the character and will of God from his own word. The Gospel requires children "to honor and obey their parents in the Lord;" the slave system, by desecrating the marriage relation, deprives the children of all reasonable knowledge of their parentage; and, as far as they have any information on the subject, they are required by the system to look upon their real or reputed parents as "chattels," to be kicked and cuffed at the will of a despot, and by the same hands to be separated from them whenever the interests or caprices of the owners required it. The operations of the southern slave-market, under the provisions of the system, are daily demonstrations of the truth of all this, and render it impossible for husbands and wives, parents and children, to per-



form their reciprocal duties as required in the Gospel, and are at open war with the order of God and the religious interests of man—heaven and hell are not more hostile than the system of American slavery and the Gospel of the Son of God!

5. As it has been shown, the Gospel requires all men to recognize, and to act upon the principle of the common brotherhood of the great family of man. The system of American slavery sets this requirement at defiance; robs millions of their natural rights and liberties; prohibits them from acquiring an education; chains them in ignorance and degradation; will not allow them the light of God's truth, only as conveyed to them by a slave-owning, or slave-defending ministry, or at least those who are impliedly pledged to its support; and with a mere sustenance for their body, works them by the hundreds of thousands into an early grave in the ignorance of barbarism, and all for the sole benefit of their owners.

6. The Gospel requires all Christians, by their time, means, piety, and influence, to aid in extending Christianity throughout the world. So palpable is this fact, that God has deposited the means for the conversion of the world exclusively with the Church, and he holds her responsible for the accomplishment of the work under the direction of

his providence, and the provisions of his grace. But the system of American slavery renders the performance of this duty impossible in the case of slaves, not excepting Christian slaves. It takes possession of their persons as property, with all they have and are—time, means, and every thing—and appropriates all for the benefit of their owners; so that, if all Christians were under this system, the entire Church of God could not own a dollar, print a Bible, preach a sermon, administer a Gospel ordinance, or send a single missionary abroad for the conversion of the world! In this particular alone the system of slavery would blot the Gospel out of being, bury Christianity, and shroud the world in moral night! The fact that some Christian slaves get means to contribute something to the missionary cause, and other religious purposes, is urged in justification of slavery. But this can only be attributed to a lack of knowledge or candor; for the system makes no provision for any such works on the part of slaves, and only tolerates it when it can be turned to its own advantage. Whatever has been, or may be done in that way, was, and is, attributable to the benevolence of a Christian heart, in opposition to a system of cupidity and oppression. And, dear sir, as the truth of the first proposition is unquestionable, that the Gospel is absolutely opposed to every system, and

institution, and every thing else that impedes its progress, resists its influence, or hinders its intended results; and as I have presented *six* instances—and the number might easily be increased—in which the system of American slavery stands convicted, in the light of facts and your own testimony, of all this hostility to the Gospel, the conclusion, therefore, is inevitable that the Gospel not only does not support or sanction chattel slavery, but is inherently opposed to the whole system.

There is no way to escape, or even to mitigate this conclusion, but by attempting to harmonize the character and design of the blessed Gospel of Christ with the *practical* operations of slavery under the system as they exist in the south, as a public fact. To undertake this, you must deny that the Gospel is designed to “disinthrall the soul from superstition, idolatry, ignorance, and sin;” you must deny that it designs to “enlighten the mind and conscience as to the true character of God and his moral government, and man’s relations and obligations to him;” you must deny that the Gospel designs to “recognize and protect the relation of husband and wife;” you must deny that it “requires parents to bring up their children in the nurture of the Lord, and that it requires children to obey their parents in the Lord; you

must deny that it requires "man to cultivate and act upon the principle of brotherhood, or brotherly love;" you must deny that "it requires Christians to aid the cause of religion or the Church to extend the means of salvation throughout the world!" By this process, and no other, you may have A Gospel in harmony with the system of slavery, as it exists in fact in this country; but it will be equally in harmony with all the heathenism in the world! There is no alternative, the Gospel must be virtually rejected, or slavery stands condemned by its Divine authority. In view of all these facts and arguments, how perfectly puerile is the attempt, by mere verbal criticisms on a few isolated texts, to compel the Bible to sanction a system which consigns millions of blood-redeemed human beings to the ignorance, degradation, and oppression of unconditional, perpetual, hereditary slavery, as "chattels, to all intents, constructions, and purposes, in the hands of their owners!!" Heaven will rebuke the presumption at no remote period. Rev. sir, I hope you may live to see your error, and fully recant the odium you have—unintentionally, no doubt—cast upon the sacred record, and that you may yet employ your noble abilities in the cause of justice and humanity.

I have shown in these letters, to a moral certainty, that slavery—American slavery—has no

support or countenance from the true philosophy of just government, or the moral and intellectual constitution of man, or his proper relation to God and to human society; and that God excluded the principle from the *first government and relations* instituted for mankind by himself—the domestic order. Also, that God requires moral and intellectual developments and improvements of man that are impossible in a state of slavery, and that the relation of master and servant, or superior and subordinate, by no means involves the principle of slavery, which consists alone in the *right of property in the person of the slave*. It has also been shown, with the force of moral demonstration, that God excluded it from the patriarchal institutions; from the moral law of the ten commandments, and from the Hebrew code, and that it has no support either from the teachings of Christ, or his apostles, or the spirit and genius of the Gospel of the grace of God. This is not all. It has been shown with equal clearness that God and his word, Christ and his Gospel do not occupy a *mere negative* position in regard to this monster of iniquity, but assail it from every point, and in all its elements, following it in all its subterfuges and “refuge of lies,” as the enemy alike of God and man. So terrible is the truth of God to it, that it has excluded the Bible from the millions of its victims; it has mob-

bed the press that would not defend it, and the ministers who would not morally perjure themselves to God, and desecrate their office and calling in its support.

The issue is fairly joined—the ignorance, degradation, injustice, depravity, and oppression of slavery against the Gospel, the Bible, the enlightened conscience of Christendom, humanity, justice, and God. As God works among nations by means, the conflict may be protracted, and the consequences terrible to the guilty, but the result can not be doubted by any who believe the Bible to be a record of the will of God to man. Slavery, as the cruel oppressor of men, and the *enemy of the Bible* and of God, is doomed to die, though the ruins of this republic should be its sepulcher—the latter of which may Heaven forbid! Its present struggles to extend its area, increase its power, and perpetuate its being, are rapidly hastening the crisis when, we humbly hope, a universal shout of disenthralled humanity will honor it with the “burial of an ass.”

One more letter will close this correspondence.

Yours, as ever,

J. H. P.



## LETTER XVI.

SLAVERY A NATIONAL SIN—NATIONAL  
RESPONSIBILITY.

Treatment of the system in the future—Must be confined to its present limits—Is a national sin—The free states have patronized and sustained it by consuming its products—Moral responsibilities of the free states—They can prevent its extension—The Christian and civilized world should protest against the desecration of the law of marriage among the slaves—No slaveholder should be allowed membership in the Church, or Christian communion, till he denounces the desecration, and uses his influence to correct it—The slave children should be educated—The free states should aid in this work—All children born of slave parents should be free—The free states and general government should provide some compensation for those who are willing to emancipate their slaves on reasonable terms—The nation through the general government should aid and colonize all who wish to go to Africa—This process would relieve this nation from the present evils and threatened calamities of slavery, and enlighten, redeem, and save Africa.

REV. W. A. SMITH, D. D.,—As I have expressed my views so freely and frankly on the sinfulness of the system of American slavery, I may not be fully understood without some further remarks. I am aware, however, that any suggestions in regard to the system, other than in its defense, are generally treated by its advocates with neglect, if not contempt; but this shall not deter me from say-

ing what I may think is proper to be said on the subject. It is the old and "short method" with this question, that whatever is sinful should be immediately abandoned; but slavery is of this character; therefore, it should be at once abolished. Although this is true as to individuals, it is not true in the same sense in regard to systems. A sinful government may be more tolerable for a time, till it is reformed or substituted by another form, than the revolution and anarchy that must follow its immediate abolition. If a savage seizes my child and carries it into the wilderness, and there discovers that the act is sinful, he does not repair the wrong or meet the justice of the case by immediately abandoning the object of his crime, and leaving the child to perish in its loneliness and destitution. Justice requires that he should sustain such a relation to the child as to protect and provide for it, till, if possible, he restores it to its former condition. Such are the principles involved in the system of American slavery.

*First.* As to the *extent* of the moral responsibility involved in the sinfulness of this system. Although the direct practical operations of slavery are confined to the southern slaveholding states, and they are the *principal* in the *offense*, the northern non-slaveholding states are *accessories* after the *offense*. It has been shown in the course of

these letters, with a clearness that can not be successfully resisted, that the soul and being of slavery in this country is its money and commercial value—strike that down and you annihilate the system. The free states have been, and still are, among the most numerous customers of the system and the largest consumers of its products. There is scarcely a man, woman, or child in the nation that is not, directly or indirectly, a consumer of the productions of slave labor; and if this source of revenue was annihilated, it would leave the system a mere wreck. Commercially, therefore, it is a national system: one portion produces and the other consumes, and both are growing rich on the unremunerated toils of the oppressed and degraded millions in bondage. It is a national subject politically and morally. Its interests and evils agitate the national councils, and, directly or indirectly, affect every department of national government. It is made the issue in many of the most important elections, both state and national; and its influence is seen in filling some of the most important offices in the republic. As a moral and religious question it has been, and still is, a subject of discussion, legislation, or deep agitation, in all the ecclesiastical bodies in the land. It is a national system as it regards *moral responsibility*. Heaven holds the *nation* responsible for

it as a sinful system, and if it provokes Divine chastisement, the rod will not fall alone upon the south, but it will be a *national* scourge.

*Second.* What then is national duty in the premises, in regard to the *system* of American slavery? The nation, as such, has no *direct* control over the system as a whole; in that respect it is a *local institution*, and can be controlled *directly* only by the south; but these facts do not release the nation from direct moral responsibility. Nor would it be released, if the south should adopt a system of immediate or gradual emancipation; for, as the nation has contributed to the degradation of the slaves, by, commercially and otherwise, patronizing the system, it would be a solemn, moral, national duty, in that case, to relieve the wants, and to instruct and elevate the emancipated slaves. Nor does the fact, that the south has not adopted, and never may adopt, any plan of emancipation relieve the nation from its moral responsibility in the case. We may lawfully do many things *indirectly* that it would be impracticable or impossible to effect *directly*. It would be impossible for men who were never called to the work to preach the Gospel in person to the heathen, but by an application of their means they can send the missionary, and thereby do indirectly what they could not accomplish directly. Such is the

moral duty of this nation in the sight of God, in regard to the system of American slavery, and woe to it if unfaithful.

1. While the nation, as such, has no legal right—and if it had it might be wholly impractical to use it—to control or directly to interfere with the system of slavery as it exists in the south, as a local institution, it has the *legal, political, and moral* RIGHT to confine it *absolutely* to its present geographical limits. I am not going to discuss here the hackneyed dogma that the south have the *right* to take *their slave property* into any territory under the general government—other than to say (1.) God's holy word recognizes no such *property*, and denounces death against all who set up any such claim; they have, therefore, no *moral right*, under the Divine law, either to own or take them as property any where. (2.) The framers of the Constitution of the United States either *did* or *did not* design to provide for taking slaves into territory then free. I deny the former, which never has been and never can be proved. And if they *did not*, then the claim of the south is a perversion of the design of that great charter of liberty, and should be repudiated at once by the whole nation. (3.) But if such was the design of the framers, and such the true meaning of the Constitution—as *the government was made for the*

*people, and not the people made for the government*—if it contains doctrines subversive of their religion and revolting to their moral sense of duty, as these claims are, they have the power and the right, and should use them, to change the Constitution and blot out of being all foundation of any such claims. (4.) For any government that, whether from a correct or an erroneous construction and application of its principles, makes war upon the enlightened conscience of a large majority of its subjects, engages in a contest which no government can survive; and, unless this southern claim for slavery is abandoned, ours will be an example.

I am aware of the probability that the cry may be raised, “The preacher is discussing political questions!!!” but this note of alarm has no terrors for me; for, as an American citizen, native-born, I have a *right*, which I will relinquish only with my life, to discuss any question of public interest that I may deem to be my duty, holding myself responsible to God and the laws of the land. But to return to the question.

Slavery should be confined to its present limits. The peace of the nation requires that it should be. The recent attempt to extend it has been marked at almost every step with blood, and has inflamed the public mind to an extent not known before in



our history; and the indications are that its repetition will produce results far more calamitous. Justice requires its restriction. Its extension is the claims of the few against the rights of the many—the demand to extend the Heaven-interdicted ignorance and degradation of slavery over virgin soil, against the rights of freemen, and of Divinely-approved institutions for the improvement, elevation, and dignity of humanity. Christianity requires that it should be restricted; that goes with an open Bible for all the people, and can not prosper without it; but the extension of slavery is the restriction of the circulation of the Bible, by excluding it from all the slaves.

This work of confining slavery to its present limits devolves mainly on the friends of liberty in the free states; for, although there are thousands in the slave states who have the same views, they are in the minority, and the depravity and despotism of the system compels them to silence, and at present they would act at the peril of their lives. This only increases the moral responsibility of those who have the power and can act. Hence, "*no further extension of slavery*" should become the SHIBBOLETH of every lover of humanity and justice in the land. It should be the subject of sober conversation in the social circle and by the fireside; it should be the standard to measure

every politician and statesman; it should be the issue at every election, and the subject of daily supplication at the throne of grace, till the enlightened public mind is concentrated and brought up to that high and firm moral position where it will say, with authority that can not be resisted, "Here shalt thy proud waves be staid." With humble reliance upon divine Providence the nation should come at once to this point and act upon the principle, fully prepared in feeling and purpose to meet all the consequences, be they what they may, perfectly assured that they can not be equal to the incurable evil of the extension of slavery. The American citizens who have the political and moral right and power to act, are entirely competent peaceably to accomplish this work.

There is no reasonable doubt that the moral convictions and sober judgment of four-fifths, if not nine-tenths, of the nation are in sympathy with this doctrine, and when the issue is honestly made and fairly presented, they will act with a harmony and force that can not be resisted. That in such an issue portentous clouds will arise, and predictions and threats of disunion and ruin fall upon the public ear, may be expected; but with justice in the premises, firm conviction of moral duty in the process, and God to control the storm and direct the result, the evils will be averted, the object

secured, the nation blessed, and the Divine name honored. I have not a doubt that the interests of this nation, for weal or woe, are staked on the doctrines of the extension or restriction of the system of slavery. Its extension will be as the letting out of the bitter waters of strife, which will flow with a desolating influence, sweeping away the liberties and fairest prospects of this republic under the despotism of the slavery power, till it provokes the wrath of Heaven and mingles in its streams the blood and violence of revolution, and adds ours to the number of ungodly governments and wicked nations, swept from the earth by the retributive judgments of an insulted Providence! Its restriction is founded in justice, will be approved of God, and will be the first effective step in laying permanently the foundation for the final overthrow of the whole system. None know better than slave-owners, that to confine slavery is to render it unprofitable and consequently to ruin it; hence the struggles for its extension.

This permanently settled in the public mind as the principle of unremitted action, that slavery can not, *must not*, SHALL NOT, be extended, would banish the idea of reopening the accursed African slave-trade, and would soon be followed by a universal conviction that the system of slavery, at no remote period, must be abandoned. This

would appeal to, and call out, the patriotism, wisdom, and benevolence of the nation to do justice to all concerned, in disposing of a subject and system now, of all others, the most threatening to the peace, prosperity, and perpetuity of the republic. Firmly believing that its restriction would be the commencement of the speedy downfall of slavery in this land, if my voice could reach the ear of every man in the nation, I would venture, most respectfully, to plead that, by his desire for the peace and happiness of the nation, by his love of justice and humanity, by his abhorrence of the oppression and degradation of men, and by the fear and love of God, he rest not till the great "fact is fixed"—slavery is prohibited—*absolutely* prohibited from ever extending its area in this country.

2. There is a fearful *moral* responsibility resting on the nation in regard to another feature of the system, which is also one of its chief supports, and which can only be reached indirectly, and by moral force and influence; namely, the open, constant, and authoritative *desecration* of the marriage relation among those who are held as slaves. It is past belief, if the facts were not overwhelming, that in a civilized and Christian country—a land of Bibles, churches, ministers, Sabbaths, Gospel ordinances, religious presses, and every thing per-

taining to the highest standard of civilization and Christianity—an institution should exist and be sustained by public consent and legislative authority, which outrages and sets at defiance one of the plainest, most important, and authoritative laws of God.

The law of marriage was the *first act of God* in regard to human relations and society; it was the law of Eden, the law of Sinai, the law of Calvary; it is the law of Christianity, civilization, wisdom, goodness, and justice. The sins of theft, robbery, and murder are not more palpably the violation of the law of God—nor half so insulting to his authority—than is the desecration of the marriage relation by the system of American slavery.

The system does not recognize either the law or the relation it creates, but specially provides to desecrate both, by sundering for life those who are united in faith and affection, and living together morally as man and wife. The provisions and operations of the system on this subject are an offense to civilization, a reproach to Christianity, a disgrace to the nation, an indignity to the law of God, an insult to Jehovah! From the fireside, the social circle, the legislative councils, the popular assembly, the pulpit, and the press, the nation, in self-defense, should send out a remonstrance that should be heard and felt throughout Chris-



tendom and the civilized world, till those who have the power either change the system or are discarded by civilized society as enemies of the government of God, and friends and supporters of the most odious and revolting barbarism. And what renders this case still more surprising and ominous of evil, indicating, indeed, a state of *judicial* blindness, ripening for judgment, is that men professing Christianity—"the love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit"—and statedly communing at the "Lord's supper," and ministers of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and grave doctors of divinity, should be among the first and most ardent supporters and patrons of this heathenish system of breaking up domestic relations, and setting at defiance the order and government of God, in regard to the law of marriage and the relations and duties it creates.

I can scarcely restrain my pen from writing severely on the subject, for the enormity of the offense is humiliation to the American name, and alarming in the sight Heaven as to its final results to our nation and our common Christianity. No man should be allowed membership in the Church of God, or be admitted to communion and fellowship with Christians, who does not denounce this monstrous sin against the order of God and the interests of man, and use all his influence religiously



and politically to banish it from the whole land. It gives me great pleasure, dear sir, to hear you say, "The custom of separating man and wife is the remnant of a barbarous age: any gentleman should be ashamed of it." (Page 316.) That to honor God and do justice to the oppressed in this particular, would strike another fatal blow at this national sin of slavery, is readily admitted; and it is for this very reason that we would entreat every patriot, every friend of freedom, every philanthropist, every Christian to exert all his influence with God and men, till this crying sin of "separating those whom God hath joined together" no longer be the disgrace of our nation and of our name.

3. That the laws of civilization, that Christianity, justice, humanity, and God, require that the rising generation of the enslaved in this country be taught the knowledge of letters, at least to the extent of the elementary principles of a practical education, must be the conviction of every mind, and especially every Christian mind, that will reflect soberly on the subject in the light of the Bible, the honor of the nation, and the eternal interests of those for whom I plead. The policy of shutting out the light from the minds of the slaves is not only a sin against the authority of God and the intellectual constitution of man, which

was formed by Infinite Wisdom for the acquisition of wisdom and knowledge, but it is the accumulation of an amount of ignorance and superstition which may one day burst as an earthquake, and rush with the resistlessness of an avalanche upon this nation; and especially if the sin of slavery, with other national crimes, provoke the chastising judgments of God. But as every state in this Union has, indirectly or directly, contributed to this ignorance and degradation of the slaves in patronizing the system by consuming its products, the sin is national and the responsibility is national. As the action of the free states in supporting the system and producing the evil is indirect, so, likewise, it can only be indirect in removing the evil. There are various means by which this may be effected. Wholly to withdraw their patronage would at once paralyze the system, and in the end destroy it; but this alone would not educate the slaves.

If the system were annihilated at a stroke, the moral responsibility of educating the emancipated would still rest upon the nation. (1.) The free states can meet and throw off their responsibility only by enlightening and concentrating public opinion on this subject. (2.) By using their influence in the national councils to establish a sys-

tem of education in the District of Columbia, over which Congress has legislative control, that would provide at least one year's schooling for all colored and slave children between the age of *ten* and *fifteen* years. (3.) By creating a fund in each state, which would amount in the aggregate to, at least, two-thirds of the expense of tuition for one year, of all slave children within the above ages. That the system of slavery, as such, would receive any such measures as here indicated with favor, is what no one acquainted with its spirit and design will believe; but that, under the rulings of divine Providence, some one of the slaveholding states should make an incurable breach upon the system by countenancing and availing itself of such provisions, is not impossible or past belief. Who that believes in the presence and power of Providence in the administration of the affairs of states and nations, will affirm that, if one of the free states should inaugurate such an enterprise, and authorize the first slaveholding state that introduced such a system of education, to draw on its funds for that purpose, no state would ever respond to the proposition? But whatever might be the result, the free states, and the friends of humanity throughout the nation, can never stand acquitted before God till they have put forth every peaceable

effort in their power to remove this curse of ignorance from the oppressed millions in bondage in our, otherwise, honorable and happy country.

4. The genius of our civil government and of human liberty, the spirit of Christianity, the claims of justice, and the order God has ordained in human society, *all imperatively DEMAND*, that every child born within the limits of our government, whatever may be the color or condition of the parents, should, from the moment of its birth, be free, so far as to be released from all relations to law as property or a chattel, and to be placed in such a situation as to enjoy all the benefits of our civilization and of our Christianity. This will be the finishing stroke to the system of American slavery; and however remote and utterly improbable such an event may be at the present, it must occur at no very distant day, or God's judgments will assuredly visit this nation. The responsibility of this, and several other features of the system of American slavery, rests *directly* upon the slaveholding states; while the responsibility of arresting the further extension of the evils and curse of the system rests *directly* upon the free states.

Men do not generally cease from evil till they are penetrated with the conviction that they are in conflict with a power which can arrest and pun-

ish, or destroy them if they persist in wrong; when fully convinced of this, they reform and become virtuous as the only means of safety and self-preservation. The same is true of institutions and governments; hence, it is folly in the extreme to suppose the system of slavery in this country will ever relax its hold upon its victims or modify its evils, till it feels to its very heart that it is encountering a power—the honor, the justice, the conscience, the religion, and the spirit of liberty of this nation—which *can* and *will* bind it in its own prison and hold it there to meet its own doom. I repeat, the freemen of this republic are bound to this work in sheer *self-defense*, and as a *moral* and *political duty* to posterity and to God. Whenever the free states, in absolute self-defense, shall restrict slavery to its present limits, and turn it back upon itself, the slaveholding states will be brought, in self-defense, to choose between the modifications in substance, as here indicated, and others, preparatory to a final abandonment of the system, and its destruction by its own power. Confine it to its present territory, and in one generation it will expire in universal bankruptcy or in blood! if no measures are taken for gradual and final emancipation. If the freemen and Christians of America do their duty in this respect, and Providence be propitious, at no remote period the



spirit of emancipation will pervade this nation, the south not excepted. Hence,

5. Another moral obligation of national duty will arise; namely, to compensate to a certain extent those who may be willing to emancipate their slaves. The limits of this letter will not allow a discussion of this subject here, other than to express my firm conviction both of its justice and practicability. It is just; for as the slaveholders have made large investments in this kind of property—falsely so called—and the free states have profited by millions in patronizing the system and consuming its products, if the peace and safety of the nation require its abandonment, those who have shared in its profits should help to sustain the loss. It is practicable; the wealth of the nation, if properly administered, is amply sufficient to meet such a demand with all other just claims without embarrassment. The public domain and even a direct tax, if it were necessary, could be rendered available for the purpose at the will of the nation. And who that deserves the name of an American would refuse to pay a reasonable direct tax, for a limited period, for the accomplishment of an object of such magnitude for good to so many millions of the oppressed, and that would reflect so much honor upon the nation, and doubtless propitiate the smiles and favor of Heaven?



To many who profess to be the friends of the slave, and to many more who are the friends of slavery, all this will appear to be more than visionary, even intensely absurd and impossible; it is, nevertheless, true that difficulties frequently appear greatest when viewed in the distance, and diminish on a near approach. Many things have appeared impossible when contemplated afar off, but when brought to a practical test were found to be entirely practicable; and such, we hope, by the overruling hand of God, will be the fact in regard to the difficulties of abolishing the system of American slavery. And should the period arrive when emancipation is fully determined on, and the process fairly commenced, another national duty will arise; namely,

6. To aid all the emancipated who may so desire to return to their "father-land;" and here, dear sir, I am glad to be fully in sympathy with you as to the importance of African colonization. Individual enterprise and private benevolence, without any direct aid from government, have fully demonstrated the practicability of colonizing the colored people of this country in Africa; and the present prosperous condition and the future prospects of the republic of Liberia, furnish the clearest indications of Divine smiles upon the enterprise. In all this a wise Providence has opened a

wide door by which the American people may, if they will, escape the evils and threatened calamities of slavery and do justice, to some extent, to a long-neglected and shamefully-oppressed people both in this country and in Africa.

What individual enterprise has accomplished in so short a time, in the work of colonization, has demonstrated what might be done should it become the work of the nation; if public sentiment so directed, it could be effected through the agency of the general government, to any extent desired, even to the entire separation of the two races. And if the *light* of even an elementary education was let in upon the African minds in this country, it would soon discover to them that Africa is their real home, and the only land where they can reach that high position in social and political life for which man was made; and they would seek that home as fast as the good of all concerned required, till the dark and portentous cloud of slavery, which now hangs over our political and national horizon, would vanish forever from our vision; and, wholly transformed, would rise a "pillar of light" on the dark continent of Africa; and, under the directions of divine Providence, spread the blessings of civilization and a pure Christianity among the unnumbered millions of that vast country—that quarter of our globe. Whether the Ameri-

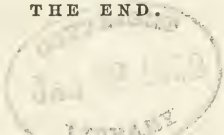
can people will follow the openings of Providence, meet their individual and national responsibilities, arrest the ravages of slavery by confining it *absolutely* to its present limits, and thereby lay the foundation for the final abolishment of the system; or whether they will yield all those great interests involved into the hands of sectional and selfish politicians, and infatuated, slavery-defending ministers, to lead them blindfold into the fires of revolution and national disaster, time only will reveal.

It should be written, as with a sunbeam, on every American's heart—*The American people must destroy the system of slavery, or American slavery will destroy this republic*; and every heart should be fired with patriotic and pious zeal, to use every means and effort consistent with Christian principles, to effect the former and to prevent the latter. Whatever may be the final results on this great question, in closing these letters I feel conscious that, to some extent, I have met individual responsibility and duty, in bearing an honest testimony against the enormous sin of American slavery, as I expect to answer at the bar of God.

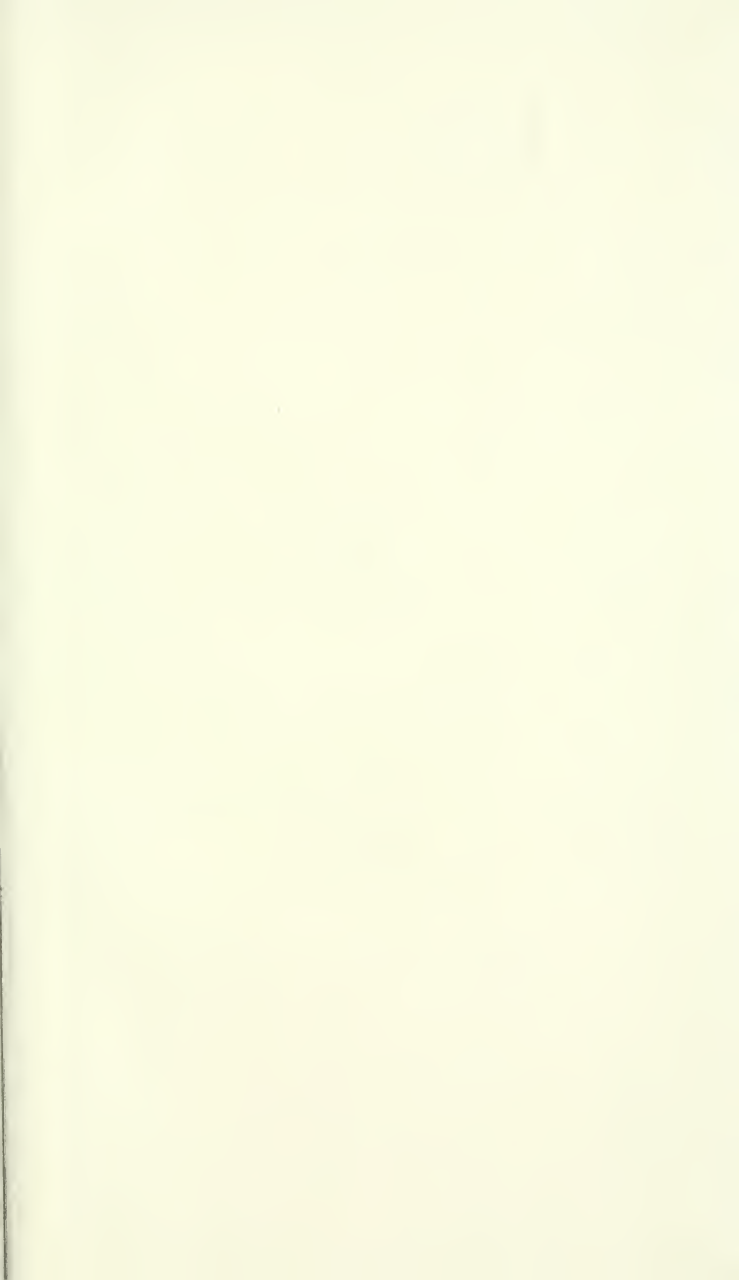
Yours respectfully, in the bonds of Christian charity,

JOHN H. POWER.

THE END.



RD19











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